THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • MONDAY • DECEMBER 30, 2024 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianxpress twitter.com/newindianxpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

CONSTITUTION HAS STOOD EVERY TEST OF TIME, SAYS PRIME MINISTER MODI

The Constitution has stood every test of time, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his monthly radio address Mann ki Baat on Sunday

CALLS THE DOCUMENT 'OUR GUIDING LIGHT'

"It is a matter of immense pride for all of us. The Constitution which its makers gave to us has stood every test of time. It is our guiding light," the prime minister said, adding that he reached "this position in life" because of the document. He asked the people to visit www.constitution75.com and learn about India's constitutional heritage and legacy

URGES PEOPLE TO BANISH HATE FROM SOCIETY

- He described the upcoming 'Maha Kumbh' as the 'mahakumbh of unity' and asked the people to resolve to banish hate from the society
- Modi also spoke about the growing global resonance of Ayurveda. He said in Paraguay, a large number of local people are reaching out to the Indian embassy where Ayurveda consultation is offered | P9

80%

FALL IN NUMBER OF MALARIA CASES IN INDIA BETWEEN 2015 AND 2023: MODI

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

179 killed as South Korean plane crash-lands, erupts into fireball

Two crew members of Bangkok-Muan flight survive; landing gear glitch, bird hit suspected

Rescue team members carry the body of a passenger at the crash site at Muan International Airport, South Korea on Sunday | AP/PTI

AGENCIES

IN one of the worst aviation disasters in recent times, all but two of 181 people on board a passenger flight were killed after it skidded off the runway while landing at South Korean's Muan international airport on Sunday and burst into flames. Horrific visuals of the accident showed the plane skidding across the airstrip at high speed after its landing gear failed to deploy, overshooting the runway, ramming a concrete wall, and exploding.

The Korean transport ministry said the Jeju Air plane was a 15-year-old Boeing 737-800 jet that had arrived from Bangkok and landed at Muan, 290 km south of Seoul, around 9 am.

South Korean officials said the airport control tower had issued a bird strike warning to the plane shortly before it intended to land. The pilot reportedly sent out a distress signal shortly before the plane touched down without using its wheels or any other landing gear.

The flight had 175 passengers and six crew members on board. According to officials, 85 women, 84 men, and 10 others whose gender could not be immediately identified, died. Emergency workers managed rescue two crew members. Officials described their condition as 'not life-threatening'.

Lee Jeong-hyeon, chief of the Muan fire station, said the plane was completely destroyed, with only the tail assembly remaining recognisable among the wreckage. The two persons who survived the crash were rescued from the tail section. Lee said investigators were looking at various possibilities for the crash, including whether the plane was struck by birds.

South Korean authorities deployed 32 fire trucks and several helicopters to contain the blaze. Over 1,500 firefighters, police officers, soldiers, and other officials were also rushed to the site to manage the situation.

Footage of the crash aired by local television channels showed thick plumes of black smoke billowing from the plane, which was still engulfed in flames.

The passengers were predominantly South Korean. Thailand's foreign ministry said two Thai passengers were among the fatalities.

HOW IT HAPPENED

The Boeing 737-800 with 181 people on board approached to land at South Korea's Muan International Airport around 9 am local time

Pilots aborted the first landing attempt due to bird strike, which reportedly damaged the jet's landing gear

Soon, the pilots issued a "mayday" call and tried to land the plane again, this time without the landing gear deployed

Upon touchdown, the plane skidded down the runway and hit a concrete barrier before bursting into flames

A bird strike is a collision between a bird and an aircraft in flight

Narrow escape for passengers as Air Canada jet catches fire

AGENCIES

ANOTHER aviation tragedy was averted on Saturday night after an Air Canada flight suffered a suspected landing gear failure and a part of it caught fire as it skidded down the runway of Canada's Halifax airport.

All 73 passengers and crew members are safe, Air Canada spokesperson Peter Fitzpatrick said. He added that there was a suspected landing gear issue as the plane arrived to land.

A spokesperson for the Nova Scotia Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which responded to the incident alongside paramedics, said some passengers suffered minor injuries. The people on board were evacuated, and then taken to a hangar to be checked out by paramedics, AP reported.

A passenger told a local television channel she heard a loud noise when the plane landed. "We heard a pretty loud—what almost sounded like a crash—sound as the wing of the plane started to skid along the (runway), along with what I presume was the engine," she said. She said the plane then skidded down the runway for a "decent" distance as the pilots worked to stop the plane. "The plane shook quite a bit and we started seeing fire on the left side of the plane and smoke started coming in the windows," she said.

The Air Canada Express flight operated by Pal Airlines was arriving from St John's, Newfoundland. Flight operations at the Halifax airport were temporarily suspended.

NEW INTEL

TAX DEPT TO TAP DIGI YATRA DATA TO GO AFTER EVADERS

DIPAK MONDAL @New Delhi

IF you are a frequent user of Digi Yatra app but don't file income tax returns, don't be surprised if you get a notice from the tax department.

According to sources, the tax department has accessed the entire passenger data captured on the Digi Yatra app, and the same is being reconciled with tax filings to check for discrepancies in the declared income. The tax department would start issuing notices in 2025 based on the Digi Yatra data, said sources.

Digi Yatra app is a civil aviation ministry-led initiative to make air traveller's journey seamless and paperless. It uses facial recognition technology, and collects passengers ID, biometrics, and details of air tickets to give easy access at airports. It is, however, not mandatory for fliers to download or use the app.

According to sources, the tax department will first go after those who don't file tax returns, and then target those who under-report their income to avoid paying taxes. The department is perusing the data of both international and domestic air travellers. Frequent or high-value travel, particularly international trips, could flag individuals whose reported earnings do not justify such expenditures, prompting further scrutiny.

"Data provided by Digi Yatra is inherently clean, reliable, and verifiable, making it a robust source for government use in tax administration. Once integrated and reconciled with income tax filings, it can effectively identify non-filers, placing them at the forefront of scrutiny. Subsequently, taxpayers engaging in income suppression or under-reporting could also be systematically targeted," said a source.

GLOBETROTTERS UNDER THE LENS

According to sources, the financial records of frequent international fliers could be subjected to scrutiny to check for any income suppression in their I-T returns

According to tax experts, Digi Yatra data holds immense potential as an alternative to the government's earlier attempts to gather travel data through loyalty programmes of air travel companies—a move constrained by privacy concerns.

"By leveraging such data, authorities can achieve greater transparency and precision in tracking high-risk taxpayers, provided that appropriate safeguards for data privacy and proportionality are in place," says Rajat Mohan, senior partner, AMRG & Associates.

Questions sent to the tax department and Digi Yatra on the issue remained unanswered till the time of filing of this report.

It must be recalled that air travellers have raised privacy concerns over the collection data on the app. However, the authorities have maintained that data is not stored in any central repository, and that it is stored locally in the phone of the passenger.

RACE TO THE FINISH

A jockey guides a pair of buffaloes during Kambala (buffalo race) at Goldfinch City in Mangaluru on Sunday | EXPRESS

RTCs postpone strike as CM agrees to release ₹2k cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Joint Action Committee (JAC) of state road transport corporation employees' unions, which had called for an indefinite strike from December 31, has decided to postpone the agitation.

This comes after Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, who met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday evening, stated that he has sought Rs 2,000 crore and the CM has agreed to release the fund.

The AITUC-affiliated KSRTC Staff and Workers' Federation, with the support of five other transport unions, had called for the indefinite strike with various demands. One of the main demands was to settle the salary dues that have been pending for the past three years.

Federation president HV Ananta Subba Rao said they decided to postpone their strike after a written assurance from the minister that a meeting will be convened with the CM after the Sankranti festival to address their various demands.

Reddy, after the meeting the CM, told the media, "Transport unions have demanded that the government fulfil their 13 demands. I met the CM and apprised him about the demands. I also placed a request to release Rs 2,000 crore."

Reddy blamed the previous BJP government for pushing the four bus corporations into financial distress.

"The BJP government left the bus corporations with a debt of Rs 5,900 crore and there were no recruitments and no new buses were added. After we came to power, however, we recruited 10,000 people and launched 4,300 buses," he said.

K'taka saw 217 maternal deaths in four months

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru

KARNATAKA recorded 348 maternal deaths till November this year, with 217 cases reported in just four months, from August to November. Of these, 179 were in government hospitals and 38 in private facilities.

The data shows that between August and November, over 50 maternal deaths were reported each month in the state. While Ringer's Lactate, an IV fluid, came under scrutiny following maternal deaths in Ballari, experts stressed that other factors, such as postpartum haemorrhage (excessive bleeding following delivery), lack of supportive antibiotics, trained medical professionals and adequate care for postpartum infections, also need urgent attention.

Dr Ramesh GH, Head of Emergency and Critical Care at BMCRI, said the role of Ringer's Lactate should not be viewed in isolation, but should be considered in a broader context. A detailed investigation into the overall treatment process and underlying medical conditions is necessary to pinpoint the real causes of the fatalities.

The suggestion that IV fluids like Ringer's Lactate can be directly blamed for maternal deaths fails to consider the complexities of medical cases, experts said and explained that a death would typically be within hours due to anaphylaxis (allergic reaction) if Ringer's Lactate were substandard or improperly administered. P7

EXPRESS READ

India not very lucky on security front: Rajnath

Mhow (MP): Addressing Army personnel at Madhya Pradesh's Mhow cantonment, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said that India is a 'not very lucky' nation on the security front and urged soldiers to keep a sharp eye on internal and external foes

ISRO to demonstrate docking of sats in space

New Delhi: ISRO is set to launch two satellites on Monday night from the Sriharikota spaceport to demonstrate docking and undocking of spacecraft in orbit, which will make India the fourth country in the world to achieve the feat.

Lyon, Boland stand firm

After reducing Australia to 91/6 in the second innings, India had a real chance to bowl the hosts for cheap. However, Marnus Labuschagne and Pat Cummins survived some scares to add to their first innings lead of 105. To add to India's woes, Nathan Lyon and Scott Boland added 55 runs for the last wicket, taking Australia to 228/9 and more importantly, putting them ahead by 333

OPEN CONTEST SET FOR THRILLING CLIMAX

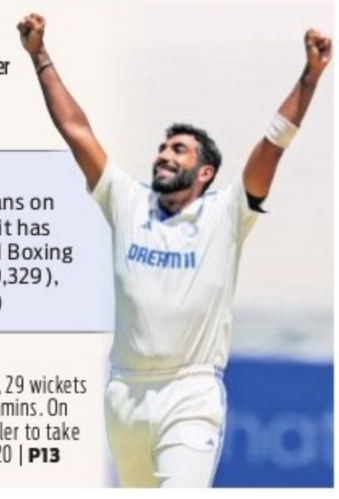
Day Four of the ongoing Boxing Day Test in Melbourne was a gripping contest. Indian bowlers ripped through the Australia top-order before being frustrated by the tailenders. All three results are possible on Day 5. A look...

Record attendance

It began with a little over 87,000 fans on Day 1, but as the Test enters Day 5, it has already become the most-attended Boxing Day Test at the historic venue (2,99,329), surpassing 2017-18 Ashes (2,71,855)

Milestone man Bumrah

It's been a happy series for Jasprit Bumrah, 29 wickets in eight innings at 13.24—12 more than Cummins. On Sunday, Bumrah became the first-ever bowler to take 200 wickets at a Test average of less than 20 | P13



GRAND FINISH

Chess high on year-end as Humpy captures second world rapid title in USA

AJAY TOMAR @Hyderabad

THERE is a different joy of being a mother. India's Koneru Humpy had won the World Rapid Chess Championship on Saturday but when she spoke about the win a day later, she could not help but speak about her seven-year-old daughter. Humpy's daughter was a thousand miles away in Vijayawada with her parents.

"My daughter won a gold medal in abacus yesterday (Saturday), so she was having her own moment," Humpy told this daily from New York on Sunday. For Humpy, her daughter's victory seems to be as big as her second world rapid medal, a record she shares with China's Ju Wenjun. "I spoke to my daughter just after the win." The 37-year-old from Vijayawada last won the title in 2019.

Sleep deprived, missing her daughter while playing against some of the stalwarts of the game, yet she remained unflustered and finished the event with 8.5 out of 11 points. The year 2024 was not as she would have liked it to be. There was a time when she was mulling quitting the sport. The win was cathartic.

"It was a rough year for me. I started with Candidates (tied for second) but then in Norway Chess and the Tata Steel Chess, my performance was very bad.

Koneru Humpy

I was feeling very low at that time. I even thought of quitting professional chess. But I was not ready to accept the defeat and finish my career on a bad note," she said, adding that she spent the whole of November training for the World Rapid and Blitz event. Chess could not have asked for a better end to the year. Men's world champion in D Gukesh, Candidates, World Cup finalist, Chess Olympiad gold for men and women and now a world rapid woman champion.

"There were a lot of spectators cheering considering it was being organised in the Financial District of New York (at Wall Street). I was ranked 10th at the start and lost the first round. I finished the day with only 2.5 points in four games. I did not imagine then that I could win. I was only looking to fight back after the first game's loss. On Day 2, I won all the four games that helped me to climb to the joint lead. But after Day 3 ended in draws, I was expecting tie-breaks. I did not know that I had won and was preparing for tie-breaks. It was only when the arbiter told me I realised. I was surprised."

On winning the event for the second time, Humpy said, "With time, the younger generation is competing fiercely and it is not easy to repeat the feat. You are more poised and energetic to win something the first time. Winning for the second time is even tougher as many players are half my age."

ALMANAC TODAY
- **Monday:** 30.12.2024 • **Year:** Krodhi • **Ayana:** Dakshinayana
- **Ritu:** Himantha • **Masa:** Margashira • **Paksha:** Krishna • **Tithi:** Amavasya 3.46 am
- **Nakshatra:** Moola 12.16 am • Moon in Makara Rashi • **Rahukaala:** 07:30 am to 09:00 am
- **Gulikakala:** 01:30 pm to 03:00 pm • **Yamaganda:** 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

WEATHER
MIN 16°C | MAX 27°C
FORECAST Mostly cloudy

Sunrise 06.41 am | Sunset 06.03 pm | Moonrise 06.03 am | Moonset 05.31 pm

QR CODES IN BMTC BUSES: READY FOR SCANNING BUT PAYMENTS ON HOLD

Conductors discouraging commuters; Shakti scheme increasing work load on conductors

RITIKA MITRA @Bengaluru

THE Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has introduced QR-code based UPI payments in most of its buses. However, the system remains under-utilised, largely due to conductors discouraging commuters from using the QR-code payment option.

Many buses now feature QR code posters on their side panels, allowing passengers to make payments digitally. Once the payment is completed, conductors issue tickets. However, the UPI payment system is yet to be fully implemented.

"In a city like Bengaluru, where UPI is the norm everywhere-- from tea stalls to high-end stores, it's honestly frustrating and disappointing that the lifeline of Bengaluru, the BMTC buses hasn't embraced it yet fully," said Aditi Reddy, a daily commuter.

"We live in a tech-driven city, and yet, when it comes to public transport, we're stuck in the past. Digital payments would not only save precious time but will also make travel far more convenient, especially during peak hours when the buses are crowded. The absence of such a simple solution is surprising and shows how far behind BMTC is, as compared to the rest of the city," she added.

Speaking about the UPI payments, BMTC bus conductors said it is difficult to accept QR-code based UPI payments for various reasons. They complained that due to poor internet connectivity in some places, the payment gets stuck and they cannot verify if the payment is made or not.

Further, they also complained that the Shakti scheme (free bus travel for women) has already increased workload.

"We have to verify Aadhaar card of every women passenger and issue zero tickets. Along with this we have to check the daily and monthly passes, student passes and others. Amidst these, it is difficult for us to verify UPI payment and issue tickets, especially during peak hours," said a BMTC bus conductor.

We live in a tech-driven city, and yet, when it comes to public transport, we're stuck in the past. Digital payments will make travel far more convenient, especially during peak hours when the buses are crowded- Aditi Reddy, a daily commuter

AN UNSAFE CROSSING

The entry to the zebra crossing from the pavement in front of Cubbon Park Metro station has been barricaded, forcing pedestrians to cross the busy Raj Bhavan Road from other spots, inconveniencing them

Rejuvenated Doddagubbi lake breathes life back to borewells

MOHAMMED YACOOB @Bengaluru

VILLAGES such as Kannur, Kadusonnenahalli, Doddagubbi, Chikkagubbi and others in the Mahadevapura Zone can look forward to improved borewell recharge and better water availability by the next monsoon, thanks to the rejuvenation of the 125-acre Doddagubbi lake by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

According to BBMP lake division officials, the restoration project cost Rs 9.5 crore. VIMOS Technocrats Pvt Ltd, a firm specialising in water body management, was hired two years ago to study, prepare a detailed project report and execute the rejuvenation two years ago.

"The rejuvenation process involved meticulous efforts to restore the lake's storage capacity by removing silt deposits, conducting hydraulic studies to construct inlet and outlet channels and ensuring an efficient network for water flow. These measures resulted in the lake's ability to retain stormwater at full capacity. Furthermore, the main bund was restored, and a ring bund was constructed around the entire lake to create a designated walking path," said Younus Parvez, managing director of VIMOS Technocrats Pvt Ltd.

The rejuvenated Doddagubbi lake in Mahadevapura zone | EXPRESS

A BBMP lake engineer noted that during last year's summer, many borewells in villages surrounding Doddagubbi Lake dried up. However, following desilting and heavy rain during monsoon, some borewells began functioning again due to groundwater recharge. "With the completion of inlet repairs, stormwater drain connections, and improved storage capacity, groundwater levels are expected to shoot up in all the surrounding villages," said the BBMP engineer.

The engineer also highlighted that encroachments have been removed in compliance with High Court orders, and fencing has been installed to enhance security. Sedimentation ponds near inlets and embankments within the lake's forested area were constructed to improve biodiversity and preserve the ecosystem.

TRANSPORT

Traffic congestion continued to haunt state capital through 2024

AKNISREE KARTHIK @Bengaluru

INDIA'S Silicon Valley Bengaluru's infamous traffic snarls continued through 2024. State government has come up with an ambitious plan of constructing tunnel roads, elevated corridors and underpasses to tackle persistent traffic congestion. However, mobility experts repeatedly say these big-ticket projects will only move vehicles, but not people.

They argue that it will only shift traffic congestion from one point to another and will not solve problems. Bengaluru already has many such flyovers and underpasses, which were aimed at solving congestion, but failed. Yet the announcements of one infrastructure project after another indicates that the government is hardly listening.

Coming to the public transport, Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) added many new buses, including the e-buses, however the total fleet is just over 6,000, while the Transport Minister himself said the city needs 10,000 buses to serve the growing mobility demands. In contrast, the number of private vehicles in Bengaluru kept adding, now standing at a whopping 1.2 crore.

Although the state transport department fixed the fare for private cabs, it is not followed and there is no action from the department. The same applies to autos. In the absence of any strong enforcement, autos are fleecing customers even during non-peak hours.

Karnataka Electric Bike Taxi Scheme, which was notified in 2021, by the state transport department was withdrawn. With this, bike taxis — e-bike taxis and the white board two-wheelers used as bike taxis — were considered illegal. However, bike taxis continue to operate as usual as the matter is in the court.

As a welcome move aimed at promoting sustainable transport, the Sustainable Transportation Lab, Indian Institute of Science, in association with Urban Morph set up India's first Centre of Excellence for Active Mobility.

Only a small stretch of Bengaluru Metro, the Green Line extension for 3.14 km from Madavara to Nagasandra, was launched in 2024. After a delay of five years, the first train on this stretch finally chugged off on November 7, 2024. With this launch, Bengaluru Metro's total network coverage extends to 76.95 km with 69 stations. Ridership has had a marked improvement with the 9 lakh patronage breached on three occasions.

The April 2024 deadline to launch the much-awaited RV Road-Bommasandra Line via Silk Board and Electronic City, was missed. It was pushed to September and then to December, missing the deadlines again. The infrastructure for the line is ready, but the Chinese company supplying coaches to them has delayed it. On February 14, the first such train arrived from China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC). The second driverless train is expected to arrive by mid-January from its partner, Titagarh Rail Systems, near Kolkata. The regular trains required to reduce rush on the Purple and Green Lines, also being supplied by CRRC. The first one will reach Bengaluru by January 15.

Tunnelling work has been completed by all the nine Tunnel Boring Machines for the underground corridor of the Kalena Agrahara-Nagawara Line. It began in July 2020, ending in October 2024 for the 13.76 km underground stretch on the line.

Foundation stone was laid in June 2022 for the 148-km Bengaluru Suburban Rail project with four corridors. Tenders have so far been awarded for civil works only in two corridors. Work has begun only on the Baiyappanahalli-Chikkabanavara (Mallige Line) and Heelalige-Rajanukunte (Kanaka Line) sections. It was also announced that they both would only be partially open by April 2027. The full project is likely to be opened by December 2028 or June 2029, pushing the deadline by two full years.

B'luru's mobility landscape in 2024 – A year of misplaced priorities

URBAN mobility which looks very simple to tackle is actually a classic example of a complex system. At the same time sustainable mobility solutions are amply clear within the fundamental and universal approach of promoting higher trip mode share on public transport, walking, and cycling. This approach can be translated into action by reducing the number of motorised vehicles, reducing vehicle kilometres travelled by all motorised vehicles, and fix energy mix of transport to renewal sources. Unfortunately, 2024 has been an year of misplaced priorities for Bengaluru in terms of State Government's continued focus on road infrastructure projects, like tunnel road, double decker, flyovers/underpasses among others, which only creates a pathway for the city to an unsustainable and unliveable Bengaluru, considering that their impact would be to decrease trip mode share of sustainable modes, increase tailpipe emissions, increase energy consumption (especially fossil fuels), increase traffic fatalities of vulnerable road users, and widen the inequitable access across gender and income groups.

This is inspite of proven experience of the city in the last few decades with such road infrastructure interventions not leading to any sustainable solution with Bengaluru still remaining as among the most traffic congested cities in India and world. This is compounded by slow pace of implementation of MRTS (metro and sub-urban rail) corridors in Bengaluru, with planning gaps on; integration of public transport modes, first and last mile connectivity, inefficient and difficult transfers, and absence of efficient passenger information system. To top it all, lack of baseline provisions and poor workmanship in infrastructure execution, continues to hinder efficient traffic management. This includes uneven road geometry, pothole-ridden roads, absent/poor quality/encroached footpaths, absence of safe cycling pathways (cyclists have become an endangered species in Bengaluru), absence as well as disregard of traffic markings/signages/signals, and lack of traffic segregation at signalised junctions based on direction of movement. The cherry on the cake in terms of misplaced priorities this year has been; non-operational Bangalore Metropolitan Land Transport Authority (BMLTA), continued fragmented governance of mobility, ad hoc based decision making and infrastructure planning by ULBs, dormant DULT, complete lack of public and stakeholder engagement on mobility infrastructure planning, and absence of push measures to discourage ownership and usage of personal vehicles (especially cars). While there were genuine attempts by Bangalore traffic police to make use of AI, however it's effectiveness will always be limited as long as the above-mentioned baseline issues remains unsolved. Moreover, traffic police as an organisation lacks technical knowhow and competence to handle the function of traffic management, rather, there role should ideally be restricted to traffic law enforcement.

ASHISH VERMA
Professor, Transportation Systems Engg. (TSE)

This clearly leads to a dire situation of mobility towards an unsustainable state and its negative impact on Quality of Life (QoL) of Bengaluru citizens. As we enter the new year 2025, the city needs surgical interventions to fix these fundamental issues to correct the priorities, which will require the city to have; one single public transport operator across all public transport modes, fully functional and active BMLTA to handle both transport planning and traffic management function, role of traffic police to be restricted to traffic law enforcement only, complete overhaul of driver education and licensing system to create safe and environmentally conscious licensed drivers, standardisation of road infrastructure planning and execution for quality delivery and workmanship of road works. Only when we take these bold steps for Bengaluru, we will create a more sustainable and liveable future for Bengaluru.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

30TH December : Pisces is my sign of the day - so the whole world may take a romantic, sensitive turn. It's great if you're a Piscean, or even born when the Moon was in Pisces but, some other signs, such as Ariens, or Capricorns, might be slightly disturbed by events which they just don't understand!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr. 20)
Today's Mercury-Uranus pattern is one of those supremely magical planetary alignments that favours dreams and imagination, but lays out banana skins for those who allow confusion to creep in. Poetic aspirations come first and practical goals may have to wait.

TAURUS (Apr. 21 - May 21)
Venus, your ruling planet, is teaming up with Saturn in a pattern which gives all sentimental, self-indulgent and creative Taureans a welcome shove in the right direction. But you may have to voluntarily renounce one commitment, if you are to make the space for a much better one.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
We'll start off with the good news: your stars are extremely prosperous. But here's the downside: romantic chaos and inspired confusion may be great fun but could result in costly mistakes. That's precisely why your main priority should be extra self-control.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
The typical Cancerian is a peace-loving creature, but you can still be easily provoked. Looking at the week as a whole, you may move from an idyllic illusion of perpetual harmony towards a realisation that a battle must be joined. And, when it comes, the struggle will be one of ideas rather than emotions.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23)
Sometimes life is just not what it seems. Yet you have a huge amount going for you. This might be more obvious to other people than it is to you. That's why you have to trust in the future - and have faith that you are indeed on the right track.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
Everything that takes place this week will be encouraged by the fact that Mercury, your ruling planet, is now in an increasingly lively condition. Your smart ideas will help you pick your way through a rapidly approaching emotional minefield.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
If the past few weeks have been free from disagreements then you're lucky. However, although, the nature of the game is changing, I don't think any of you will be unaware of the turbulent undercurrents building up this week. Keep your eye on the ball, Libra.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
You'll soon have a new and brighter perspective on the immediate future. In fact, if you're a typical mainstream Scorpio, you may rub your hands with glee at what is just around the corner. If you've spoken out against certain practical arrangements and restrictive obligations, you may soon be vindicated.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22)
You have little understanding of other people's intense feelings. You may even be rather bemused by this week's emotional events and general air of hysteria. Unless, that is, you have been here, done that and got the tee shirt. Experience counts for a lot!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20)
Your emotional and romantic stars could not be better, so, if you're in difficulties, the key lies in your own complicated expectations and too high standards. Take other people at face value and assume that they are being straight with you, at least for now.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
The winds of change will be blowing, gently at first but then with great force. By all means relax, but retain a guarded approach to all developments, not just those which are obviously dodgy. If other people do end up putting pressure on you, then it's probably because you need them to give you a shove in the right direction.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20)
You should be in your element this week, at least until Thursday or Friday. A series of major planetary patterns decrees that this is a week when Piscean qualities - imagination, intuition, romance and compassion - are dominant for everyone. And especially, of course, for you.

Solutions to Saturday's puzzle

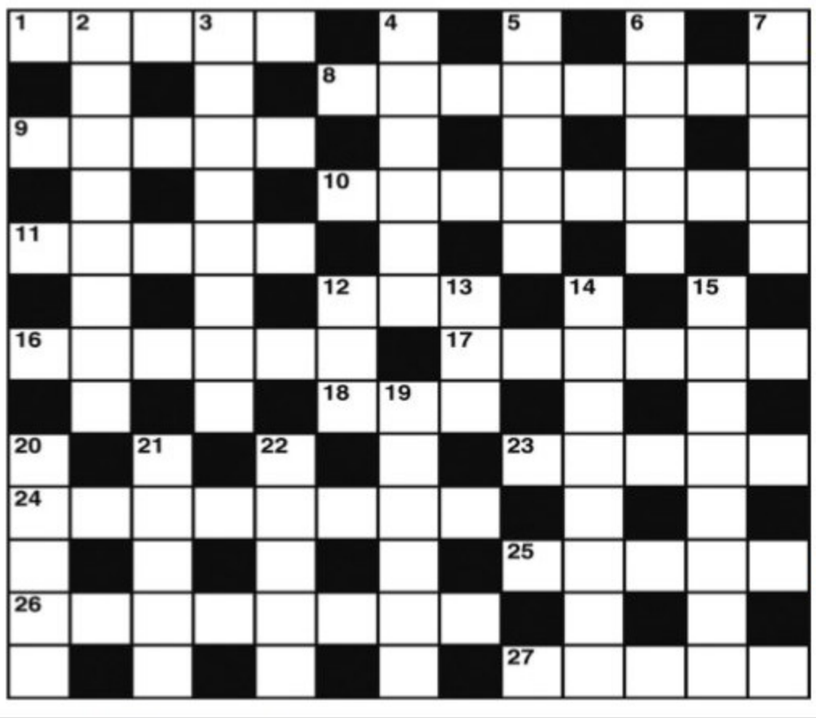
1	7							
					7			8
9	3	2		5				
		3		4	1		8	
	4		5		6		7	
	5		3	7		1		
				2		4	9	6
3			4					
							3	2

8	6	4	5	2	9	7	3	1
2	9	1	3	7	4	5	8	6
7	3	5	8	1	6	4	2	9
4	2	8	1	9	5	6	7	3
6	1	7	4	8	3	9	5	2
3	5	9	7	6	2	8	1	4
1	4	2	6	5	8	3	9	7
9	8	6	2	3	7	1	4	5
5	7	3	9	4	1	2	6	8

SUDOKU HARD

TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3X3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



CROSS WORD

ACROSS
1 Include it in the tax (5)
8 Gave off bubbles induced by electrical discharge (8)
9 Going with some hesitation to make a bid (5)
10 New garden city of old Iraq seen in splendour (8)
11 Had the odour of fish (5)
12 Bank dispute (3)
16 Chase gives us pure diversion (6)
17 A taxi turns back to take us to part of the capital (6)
18 Give father a kiss for the sake of peace (3)
23 Quick to move, I left in time (5)
24 It's champagne and the highlights for these idols (3,5)
25 New gates for the theatre (5)
26 Misplaced trust in a person unsuited to camp life (8)
27 Taper off having to say too much (5)

DOWN
2 Notorious for being on good terms with celebs (8)
3 Careless or else she'd changed (8)
4 City's side at sea in scoreless draw (6)
5 The main body or just the chest? (5)
6 Change may be converted later (5)
7 Love to make an entrance we hear (5)
12 Cloth salesperson (3)
13 May be pliable but means to grow stronger (3)
14 In plastering he has greater trouble under a piano (8)
15 Hustling around in the daytime (8)
19 Stop doing wrong? (6)
20 Breaks up bridges (5)
21 Checks up and notices something (5)
22 In a ship a sailor plays a prominent part (5)

SATURDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Diversions, 6 Bloc, 10 Trail, 11 Exoticism, 12 Windfall, 13 Padre, 15 Priests, 17 Siskins, 19 Reynard, 21 Gallant, 22 Paths, 24 Glissade, 27 Reasoning, 28 Libra, 29 Sent, 30 Changeless.

Down: 1 Date, 2 Viability, 3 Ruled, 4 Icecaps, 5 Noodles, 7 Laird, 8 Compensate, 9 Disposal, 14 Spare parts, 16 Snapshot, 18 Inaudible, 20 Dogfish, 21 Going on, 23 Train, 25 Solve, 26 Pass.

JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

PWRIE

TLOAT

OBBMOA

ESWTFE

You have the right to remain silent!
Got one!
Freeze!
Let's round them all up!
WHEN THE POLICE STATION BECAME INFESTED WITH FLIES, EVERYONE JOINED THE ---
11
4
Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

©2024 Tribune Content Agency, LLC All Rights Reserved.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print your answer here: _____ _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: PROVE WHOSE FEISTY EITHER
Answer: When they planted three spruces side-by-side, they had a — "TREE-O" OF TREES

Acting on a tip-off, the Chikballapur Cyber Crime police inspected four luggage vehicles and found beef which was being illegally transported from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh to Bengaluru. Four people have also been arrested

Beware of NY offers, cyber crooks on prowl to target party-goers

Do not open unsolicited messages, warn cops

RAKSHITH GOWDA @Bengaluru

AS the New Year approaches, cyber criminals have started targeting party-goers with malicious WhatsApp messages, offering fraudulent deals on party venues, hotels and clothes. The messages often contain APK (Android Package Kit) files, which can install malware on the victims' devices, granting criminals access to personal and financial information.

APK file fraud involves hackers sending links via WhatsApp, SMS, or email. Once the victim downloads and installs these files, cyber criminals can access devices to steal data, including banking details. Earlier, in APK link cases, fraudsters used to send messages to individuals asking them to update their KYC to prevent bank accounts from being blocked, offer reward points and even send links asking customers to update the bank apps installed in their mobile phones. In 2023, 1,334 OTP, KYC and APK link fraud cases were reported while in 2024 till November, 893 cases were reported.

Chandragupta, Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime), warned citizens about the growing threat of APK file fraud. "Such frauds can take various forms. To stay protected, people should avoid clicking on unsolicited messages and rely only on genuine applications," he said.

TAKE NOTE

- Only download apps from trusted sources like Google Play Store
- Avoid clicking on suspicious links, especially from unknown senders
- Avoid granting unnecessary permissions to applications
- Use mobile security software to scan APKs before installation

The senior officer further added that individuals should verify the authenticity of messages before engaging with them. "Stick to official platforms for booking events, hotels, or making purchases, and install applications only from trusted sources," he added.

Another senior officer, who handles cyber crime cases, said fraudsters lure victims with personalised offers such as exclusive New Year discounts or VIP access to high-profile parties. Fraudsters take advantage of the festival season to dupe individuals, sending 'best' and 'cheap' offer messages.

Fraudsters can also send deceptive messages in the form of customised greeting cards in the victims' name to friends, which may contain an APK file.

Workers install CCTV cameras on Brigade Road, where thousands gather to welcome the New Year | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Follow law, celebrate responsibly, says DKS

Bengaluru: Strict action will be taken against those who create a ruckus, misbehave and violate the law during the New Year celebrations, said Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar. Speaking to reporters here on Sunday, Shivakumar said more than 10,000 CCTV cameras have been installed across the city to monitor illegal activities during the celebration, and urged citizens to celebrate responsibly. He also appealed to citizens to uphold the honour and dignity of the state during the celebrations. He said following the demise of former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh, the state government has declared a 7-day mourning period. "There will be no government programmes during this period. But there will be no restrictions on private events," he clarified. Shivakumar said the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and police will issue guidelines for traders. Even if time extensions are granted, no one should break the law, he said. **ENS**

EXPRESS READ

Labourer held for killing friend in drunken brawl

Bengaluru: Police have arrested a 36-year-old labourer for killing his friend on December 26. The accused has been identified as T Nagaraj, and the deceased is Srinivas (45). Both were staying in a rented house in Srinivasanagar, in CK Achukattu police station limits, and hailed from T Narasipura in Mysuru district. The duo worked as construction labourers. The police said they traced the mobile phone location of Nagaraj and nabbed him on Friday. On December 26, Nagaraj and Srinivas consumed alcohol and engaged in a heated argument over the use of mobile phone by Srinivas. In a fit of rage, Nagaraj hit Srinivas with a water heater coil, causing internal injuries. Nagaraj fell asleep after the incident and tried to wake Srinivas in the morning only to realize that he was dead. Fearing arrest, he fled the scene. **ENS**

Woman dies after C-section in Tiptur hosp

Bengaluru: A twenty-six-year-old woman died after undergoing caesarean section at the government hospital in Tiptur on Saturday midnight. The deceased Firdouse was a resident of DJ Halli in Bengaluru, and had come to her parents home. This was her second pregnancy. Surgeon Dr Ravi had conducted the surgery. She developed a pulmonary embolism and bled profusely from her mouth and nose. She also had uncontrollable cough, administrative officer Shivakumar said. Health and Family Welfare Principal Secretary Dr Harsh Gupta audited the incident by holding a video conference with the authorities concerned on Sunday, said District Health Cfficer Dr Chandrashekar. **ENS**

Commuters fume as pvt buses jack up fares

AKNISREE KARTHIK @Bengaluru

JUST ahead of the New Year, private bus operators have hiked their fares to cash in on people heading to their home towns, or tourist and pilgrimage destinations.

According to passengers, the fares have gone up by over 20 per cent on all routes. They complained that there is no enforcement by the transport department to curb overcharging by private bus operators.

Due to the New Year rush, trains and government buses are booked. On regular days, the ticket cost of an AC sleeper bus, even from a leading private travels firm, would be within Rs 1,500 from Bengaluru to Salem. However, now, the rates have already crossed Rs 2,000 and as time passes, the rates will keep on increasing, said Purushotham Shiva, a passenger.

Comparing the recent bus fare hike with the one he experienced during Deepavali, he said, "The cost of the tickets are almost double now. This time, the fare has increased by over 30 per cent."

"During New Year, Sankranti, Ugadi, Independence Day,

Ganesh Chaturti, Ayudha Pooja, Deepavali and on long week ends, private travel operators jack up the fares. The government just projects that it carried out raids here and there against the overcharging operators. However, this gets repeated every season," said Vinay Kumar, a private company employee. "As we were sure that private buses will hike the fares, we planned our New Year celebrations well in advance and booked tickets on KSRTC," he added.

The transport department, which is empowered to conduct raids and prevent private travel operators from charging exhorbitant fares, has not taken any strict action. Officials from department urged passengers to call the helpline numbers (94498 62439 and 9449863426) to report incidents of private bus operators charing excess fares.

'PROTECT CUBBON PARK'

Members of Cubbon Park Walkers' Association hold a candlelight vigil, urging the government not to permit New Year celebrations inside the park | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Cheating case: 2nd FIR against woman

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A second FIR has been registered against Shwetha Gowda, who was arrested by the Commercial Street police for allegedly cheating a jewellery shop owner of Rs 2.4 crore by using the name of former minister Varthur Prakash, following a complaint by another jeweller from Shivamogga.

R Balaraj Shet, owner of Pragati Jewellery shop from Sagar in Shivamogga, stated in his complaint that Shwetha was introduced to him by Sanjay, a jewellery shop owner in Bengaluru.

On December 11, Shwetha received 250 gram of antique jewellery worth over Rs 20 lakh from Shet's brother, who met her at a cafe in the city.

She had given two cheques worth Rs 5 lakh each and another cheque worth Rs 6 lakh, claiming that the remaining Rs 4.75 lakh would be sent through RTGS. However, she failed to transfer the amount, and the three cheques were invalid.

When questioned, she allegedly said there was an issue in her bank and her phone was switched off since December 14, as per the FIR.

He called Sanjay, who said he was also defrauded by Shwetha and he had filed a complaint against her, following which he too lodged a complaint. Shwetha is currently in police custody as she was arrested in connection with the cheating case filed by Sanjay.

House owners accuse developer of encroaching civic amenity site

S LALITHA @Bengaluru

HOUSE owners at an upscale apartment complex in Byatarayanapura on Ballari Main Road are aggrieved over a move by the developer of an IT park adjacent to their building to build a compound wall which allegedly encroaches the civic amenity (CA) site earmarked here. 'Renaissance Prospero' apartment owners charge developer Gardencity Realty of partially demolishing their compound wall on Saturday without their consent and have now posted security staff 24x7 to safeguard their premises.

A total of 160 flats in 'Renaissance Prospero' built by Prospero Realty were handed over to the buyers by 2006. Its sister concern, Gardencity Realty, is building the IT Park.

Renaissance Prospero Residents Welfare Association president Prashanth Rai told *The New Indian Express*, "The CA site here was relinquished to the BDA in 2001. The Relinquishment Deed too has been done. No one has the right to build anything on it."

"This is the third attempt by Gardencity Realty to build a compound wall for their Rs 1,200 crore IT Park encroaching on our space on survey numbers 18/2, 3, 4 and 5. We filed two complaints at the Amruthahalli police station in October and November this year when they attempted to do it. This time, they have gone ahead and demolished 40 metres out of our 90m wide wall before we stopped them," Rai added.

House owner V Maruthi alleged that an attempt is being made to take over between 4,000-5,000 sqft of land by the builder. "There are multiple issues we are facing at the hands of the builder. For instance, we are residing here without an Occupancy Certificate obtained for the complex. Many amenities like club house, gym, swimming pool and so on promised to us have never been delivered," he said.

Rai also pointed out that the stormwater drain has been diverted through the Park and open space available in the complex. "We have barricaded it so that kids and seniors do not fall into it accidentally. Space for leisure activity for the residents has been restricted because of this," he explained.

The compound wall built on the southern side of the Renaissance Prospero was partially demolished by the developer Gardencity Realty on Saturday

The builder had managed to get a modified sanction plan from the BDA in 2018 for the project without the consent of the residents, the president pointed out.

Chief Operating Officer of Gardencity Reality, Ashish Bhasin, claimed that the wall was being built only on the land owned by it in the IT park. "We have built it in survey numbers 18/5,6 7 & 8 which is not the property of the apartment complex. A joint survey has been done with the residents recently. I will meet them on Tuesday and sort out the issue."

The association has also filed two writ petitions against Gardencity Realty and its sister concerns as well as the BDA and the BBMP in the Karnataka High Court. The court has stated that the fate of any new construction being carried out there will depend on the final verdict.

YOUR GUIDE TO THE WORLD

GLOBAL EXPRESS

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS GROUP

Expert opinions | In-depth analysis
Comprehensive coverage

A WORLD BATTLING CONFLICT AND CHAOS 2024 RECAP

Scan to watch

DECODED BY

NEENA GOPAL

IN CONVERSATION WITH EXPERTS

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO STAY UPDATED

STATE BANK OF INDIA

REGIONAL BUSINESS OFFICE-03 (MALLESHWARAM)
Second floor, SBI Building, Mysore Bank Circle KG Road, Bengaluru-560 009

PREMISES REQUIRED ON LEASE
[Corrigendum to SBI web publication (Published from 02/12/2024 to 23/12/2024) due to not receiving minimum required Quotations]

The Regional Manager, RBO-3, Malleshwaram on behalf of SBI invites offer from owners / Power of Attorney holders for **premises on lease/ rental basis for Commercial / Office use having Built-up area of about 465 Sqmt (5000 Sqft +/- 25%) for SBI Yeshwanthapur Branch (3297)** to be relocated on Main Road within a radius of 1 Km from existing premises, preferably on Ground floor.

The format for submission of **Technical Bid** containing detailed parameters, place of submissions, terms of conditions and **Price Bid** can be downloaded from SBI website www.sbi.co.in under SBI in the news/Procurement News from **01.01.2025 to 15.01.2025.**
Last date of submission **on or before 3.00 PM 15.01.2025,** Brokers will not be entertained.

Sd/- Regional Manager
Regional Business Office-03, Malleshwaram

We are all ears.

We want you to smile. Always. So, feel free to call anytime you want to bring anything to our notice.

Reach our Customer Care.

Tata Tele Broadband/Wifi Customers:

- Dial our 24x7 general information toll free number 1800 266 1515
- Write to us at listen@tatatelebroadband.com / 1515@tatatel.co.in
- Manage your account on https://www.tatateleservices.com/imanage

Download our iManage app from Play Store or App Store, or log into My Account on our website www.tatatelebroadband.com

In case the complaint is not received to your satisfaction, you may write at appellate.kk@tatatel.co.in

www.tatatelebusiness.com

TATA Tele Business Services | DO Big

Tata Teleservices Ltd. Registered Office Address: Tower 1, Jeevan Bharati, 124, 10th Floor, Connaught Circus, New Delhi - 110 001. CIN: U74899DL1995PLC066685 **Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) Ltd. Registered Office Address:** D-26, TTC Industrial Area, MIDC Sanpada P. O. Turbhe, Navi Mumbai - 400 703. CIN: L64200MH1995PLC086354 Tel No: 1800 266 1515 email id: 1515@tatatel.co.in

Legislative Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti on Sunday said the videos of the occurrences on the last day of the winter session in Belagavi, involving MLC CT Ravi and minister Laxmi Hebbalkar, which are in the public domain, and accompanying complaints will be sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for authentication

CONTRACTOR'S SUICIDE: BJP GOES FOR PRIYANK'S JUGULAR

Min meets CM, says ready for investigation

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

OPPOSITION BJP is going full throttle against RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge, son of AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, in the case of Bidar contractor **Sachin Panchal**'s suicide, which exposed the plight of contractors to get government projects.

As BJP earlier managed to get B Nagendra removed from the cabinet for his alleged involvement in the multi-crore Maharshi Valmiki ST Development Corporation scam, it is adopting a similar strategy to target junior Kharge. It is already talking about how KS Eshwarappa, who was the RDPR minister when the party was in power, resigned after Santhosh Patil, a contractor from Belagavi, committed suicide after naming him.

As Priyank's supporter and former Kalaburagi corporator Raju Kapanur allegedly abetted the suicide of Panchal, and has been booked by the police, the saffron party is seeking his resignation from the post.

Rajya Sabha member Lahar Singh Siroya posted on X, "While respected Mallikarjun @Kharge Ji is busy saving democracy in Delhi, this is what is happening in his backyard, the Republic of Kalaburagi. His son, who acts like a great constitutional expert, is getting into one trouble after another. This is not the only thing that is happening, the details of Kharge Ji's family trusts and land scams are also tumbling out one after the other. His family trust was recently forced to return 5 acres of KIADB land in Bengaluru, taken under the Dalit quota. Thanks to Smt. Sonia Gandhi's RTI legislation, the documents are rich in details. Thanks also to the leadership tussle in @INCKarnataka, the flow of information is good. Nobody is loyal to anybody in the state Congress but only to themselves and their chair."

Leader of opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka demanded Priyank's resignation. "Will the Ambedkar Constitution not apply to the Kharge family? Priyank Kharge, who preaches to others, should resign and show morality. Priyank Kharge is neither a Kalaburagi Nizam nor his followers are 'Razakars'. It is clear that Priyank Kharge's close associates played a role in the death of contractor Sachin. Therefore, he should resign immediately," he urged.

Panchal mentioned Kapanur in the death note, saying the latter was threatening him to pay money, Ashoka stated.

"Raju Kapanur is identified in Kharge's close circle and was also a corporator in Kalaburagi. He was previously arrested on charges of possessing an illegal pistol. Despite knowing all this, Priyank has not distanced the goon which means that a government of goons and rowdies is running in our state," he alleged. The LoP in Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy sought Priyank's arrest. Meanwhile, BJP state president BY Vijayendra visited the victim's family members and expressed his solidarity with them.

Priyank meets CM

RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at the latter's residence Cauvery on Sunday evening and briefed him about the contractor's suicide. They discussed whether to initiate a probe by an independent agency. Priyank told the CM that he will abide by the decision of the latter and Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara.

Priyank told the CM that he was not involved in the incident and will face the probe, saying the authenticity of the seven-page Panchal's death note will be ascertained by the Forensic Science Laboratory.

Khandre promises justice to Sachin's kin

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bidar

MINISTER for Forest, Ecology and Environment Eshwar Khandre, who is also the district in-charge minister for Bidar, visited the residence of contractor Sachin Panchal, who ended his life on Thursday, at Katti Tugaon village of Bhalki taluk on Sunday. He consoled members of the bereaved family.

The minister assured the Panchal family that he would make all efforts to provide compensation of Rs 10 lakh to the family. He added that he would also request the chief minister to order an impartial inquiry into the incident.

Khandre said that the Railway Police are already investigating the case and the truth will come out. He said that whoever is guilty, no matter how influential they are, will be punished. As the MLA of the constituency and the district minister, he will try to provide justice to the family, he said. "Let the authorities submit the FSL report on the death note, reportedly written by Sachin to the government, and the latter will certainly take appropriate action," Khandre said, adding that it is the duty of everybody to protect law and order, and no one should do politics on this issue.

Bidar district in-charge minister Eshwar Khandre interacts with the relatives of contractor Sachin Panchal, during a visit to their residence on Sunday | EXPRESS

The deceased contractor's father, Mounappa Panchal, mother Iramma, sisters Sangeeta, Surekha, Sujatha, Sunita, and Savita, along with other family members were present when Khandre visited the residence.

It may be recalled here that Sachin's death note stated that he was taking the extreme step, due to alleged harassment of former corporator of Kalaburagi, Raju Kapanoor, who is said to be a supporter of RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge, and five others.

Vijayendra wants suicide case handed over to CBI

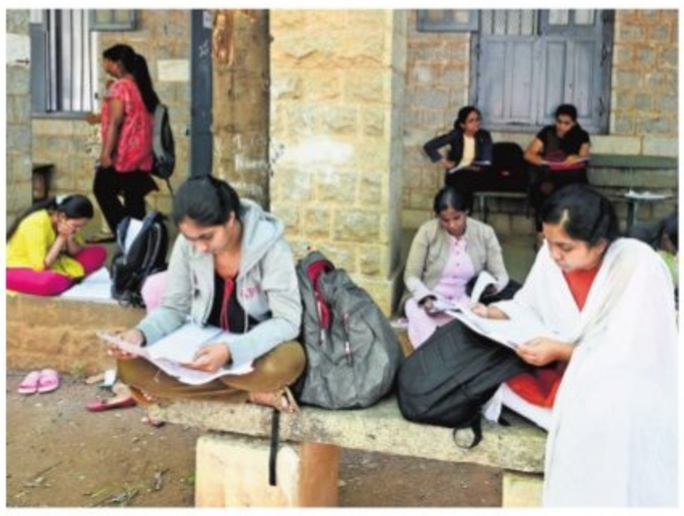
BIDAR: BJP state president BY Vijayendra on Sunday demanded the state government to entrust the case of suicide by contractor Sachin Panchal to the CBI, for an impartial inquiry. Speaking to the media after visiting Sachin's residence, at Katti Tugaon village of Bhalki taluk on Sunday evening and consoling members of the bereaved family, Vijayendra said CM Siddaramaiah should consider the incident seriously, and also ask for RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge's resignation. Vijayendra said Sachin's family members are claiming that "his death is not suicide, but murder". "The government should understand it. The family members have said that the negligence on the part of the government was the reason for Sachin committing suicide," the BJP state president said. He further added that the BJP would stand with Sachin's family. Vijayendra further alleged that police stations have been converted into Congress party offices. "The police could have prevented the suicide, if they had made up their mind. Sachin's sister spent hours trying to lodge a missing complaint, after Sachin went off the grid. Police could have received the complaint and traced his location through Sachin's mobile phone. But they did not do so, perhaps due to political pressure," Vijayendra said.

KPSC exam: Candidates protest mismatch in OMR sheet, hall ticket no.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Vijayapura, Kolar

THE reported mismatched registration numbers and OMR sheets given to students of Gazetted Probationary Group A and B examination, conducted by the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC), on Sunday triggered protests, with many candidates refusing to write the exam. At some centres in Kolar too, candidates faced a similar problem.

In Vijayapura district, 12,741 candidates had registered to appear for the exam at 32 centres. The problem occurred at two centres at SECAB Educational Institution and Marathi Mahavidyalaya when candidates discovered discrepancies between their registration numbers and those printed on the OMR sheets. Upset, several candidates walked out of the centre, refusing to attempt the examination.



Candidates brush up on some last-minute lessons, before heading to the KPSC's Gazetted Probationers Exam hall in Bengaluru on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

Learning about the incident, Additional Deputy Commissioner Somalinga Gennur and Zilla Panchayat CEO Rishi Anand visited the affected centres to address the situation. After discussions with KPSC officials, they acknowledged the discrepancies and assured the candidates that corrective measures would be taken immediately. KPSC officials advised candidates to manually record their registration numbers on the OMR sheets to ensure the examination could proceed.

To pacify aggrieved candidates, the officials assured them additional time. Following these assurances and persuasion by officials, the candidates agreed to resume writing the examination. Meanwhile, police personnel were deployed at the examination centres to prevent any further disruptions.

In Kolar, 5,817 students appeared for the examination. As students pointed out the mismatch between their OMR sheets and hall ticket numbers, officials told the students to write their hall ticket numbers on OMR sheets and that it would be considered during valuation.

Coming out of the exam hall, the candidates said it was painful to see that the examination is facing issues even though it is being conducted for the second time.

AGRI-ECOCOMY

3G: Guarantee schemes, GDP growth, good rain put state in better shape, but infra hit

ASHWINI M SRIPAD

THE severe drought in 2023, global economic slowdown and post-Covid crisis over the last few years had slowed down the economy in Karnataka. Now, good rain, state-sponsored guarantee schemes and growing Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are pushing the state to score better on the economic front.

But as the state is spending massive amounts on implementing guarantee schemes, infrastructure development has taken a hit.

Just a few weeks ago, the Chief Minister's Office released a statement that the state continues to drive India's economic progress, registering a robust GSDP growth of 10.2% for 2023-24, significantly surpassing the national average of 8.2%, according to data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

"The state achieved this feat despite severe challenges, including the worst drought in a decade and a slowdown in global IT markets," it stated.

Breaking down the data, economists said buying power has been increasing among the upper class in urban areas, but not so with the lower middle-class. "By giving Rs 2,000 per family through the Gruhalakshmi scheme, the poor and lower middle-class now have more consumption power. The money is mostly spent on groceries, soaps, detergents, toothpaste, oil and other essentials that give 15% back to the state government in terms of GST," a retired bureaucrat said. This could be one of the major reasons for economic growth in Karnataka, he surmised.

According to the bureaucrat, when a product is purchased, the company produces more of it, creating more jobs. Also, these companies purchase raw products from other sectors, generating money and pushing the overall GDP.

This year, the state witnessed good rains filling up all the dams. When the dams are full, hydro-electric generation is more. This means the state need not look for an alternative source for generation or purchase power from outside like last year. Also, in drought years, the government ends up paying more compensation to farmers for crop loss. This year, with good rain, the government's financial burden has reduced.

But there has been widespread displeasure over the allocation of funds for development works for each constituency. This anomaly has a cascading effect. Companies that come to invest in the state look for better infrastructure. With the money being spent on guarantee schemes, there is none left for infrastructure. Some of the companies are already looking to move outside Karnataka. If they move in large numbers, job opportunities go down, affecting the state's economy, government sources said.

For farmers, 2024 has been better than 2023 when the state witnessed a severe drought. According to Srinivas Reddy, former director, Karnataka State Natural Disaster Management Centre, dams were dry last year. This year, as of December, 90% of dams are full which is good news for farmers as this has improved groundwater level too, he added.

Though the economic situation is good, the state government has been complaining about lesser tax allocation by the central government. Recently, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi and stressed that the state should get its rightful share. The chief minister stressed on urban infrastructure, stating that Bengaluru is among the top three contributors to the country's GDP and the city needs major infrastructure investment.

In his letter to the PM, Siddaramaiah also sought funds for irrigation works and clearance to proceed with various irrigation projects, including Mekedatu.

GOVT MUST TAKE CARE OF AGRICULTURE, LIFELINE OF KARNATAKA

HANAMANAGOUDA BELAGURKI
Ex-chairman, Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission

KARNATAKA stands at the eighth place in geographical area and ninth in population in the country. The state has cultivable land of 101 lakh hectares, of which 40 lakh hectares are irrigated. Annually, more than one crop is raised in 21 lakh hectares.

The population is around seven crore, of which 60% is rural and 40% urban. Around 80 lakh have agriculture land holding, 90% of whom are small and marginal farmers.

Agriculture crops are grown during kharif, rabi and summer seasons. Agriculture crops are grown in around 80 lakh hectares, while horticulture crops in around 25 lakh hectares, in 10 agricultural zones.

Irrigation in Karnataka

Coastal Karnataka receives 4,000 mm of rain with 120 rainy days, while interior Karnataka, 400 mm with 35-40 rainy days.

Krishna and Cauvery basins provide water for multi-purposes, while west-flowing rivers are mainly for electricity generation. The remaining rivers flow for short distances.

The state government has undertaken large, medium and small irrigation projects. Four irrigation corporations - Krishna Jala Bhagya Jala Nigam Ltd (KBJNL), Karnataka Niravari Nigam Ltd (KNNL), Visvesvaraya Jala Nigam Ltd (VJNL) and Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Limited (CNNL) – work under the water resource department.

In addition, farmers have installed nearly 30 lakh pumpsets. Totally, 40 lakh hectares Irrigation potential has been created, while nearly 60% of agriculture land is rain-fed.

The Cauvery water Dispute Tribunal (CWDT), in its final verdict, allocated 270 tmcft of water to Karnataka, while also ordering the state to release 192 tmcft annually to Tamil Nadu. The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT-II) allocated 907 tmcft of water to Karnataka in its final verdict which is 273 tmcft more than 734 tmcft allocated by KWDT-I. In all, Karnataka gets 907 tmcft. The height of Almatti dam is to be increased from 519 metre to 524.286 metre.

Impact of agriculture and irrigation on state economy

Agriculture and Irrigation are the lifeline of Karnataka. We are all aware that the state's economy was sustainable during Covid because of agriculture.

This year, the monsoon has been good and reservoirs are full. The targeted sowing area has been achieved and water supply is sufficient in the command area. That is the reason the yield of cereals has reached 125 lakh tonne, pulses 22 lakh tonne, oil seeds 13 lakh tonne, cotton 24 lakh bales, sugarcane 700 lakh tonne, fruits 55 lakh tonne, vegetables 86 lakh tonne, plantation crops 10 lakh tonne, spices 8 lakh tonne, milk 30 million litres and fish 12 lakh tonne. Despite good overall agriproduce, tur yield was affected because of untimely rain.

Agriculture contributes around 16-17% of GSDP.

Irrigation facilities help farmers achieve expected yields and insulate them during drought years. Apart from creating an evergreen revolution, irrigation has also facilitated allied agricultural activities like animal husbandry, poultry, pisciculture, sheep raising etc.

The central government is facilitating agriculture by introducing schemes like Kisan Samman, Krishi Sinchayi, NFSM, Solar KUSUM Yojana etc, Karnataka is also extending facilities like Krishi Bhagya, PMKSY, NFSM, Kisan credit card, Interest-free crop loans, secondary agriculture, SC/ST schemes, Surya Raitha Scheme etc.

Majority of the population in the state depends on agriculture. In irrigated areas, employment opportunities are more and steady income is assured. That is the reason the population density is high in these areas. Per capita income is more in irrigated and plantation areas than in rain-fed areas.

Karnataka is next only to Rajasthan in rain-fed agriculture in India. Such agriculture leads to uncertainty over yields, and farmers are forced to emigrate to cities for earning opportunities. This year, the production was high, but market prices especially for cereals – paddy, jowar and bajra – went below the minimum support price (MSP). Such fluctuating prices are making it difficult for farmers to come out of the vicious loan cycle.

Here are some suggestions to empower farmers

1 To overcome the effects of drought, the government should help farmers build water tanks. A pond of 100x100 sqft with 30 ft depth can store 0.00002 tmcft of water. 5,000 such tanks can hold 1 tmcft of water. Each tank will cost around Rs 3 lakh. These tanks will be decentralised reservoirs. The government must extend a 50% subsidy to farmers to build such tanks.

2 The state government should procure cereals without any limit to avoid buying them, like rice, from other states.

3 At present, the state exports mango, pomegranate, gherkin, rose onion and spices like chilli pepper etc. The government should give more incentives to promote exports by exploring markets abroad. This will earn the state more foreign currency.

4 The PM Fasal Bima Yojana (crop insurance scheme) should be made compulsory to all farmers and implemented effectively.

5 To avoid seed adulteration and shortage, the government should promote research to develop improved varieties.

6 The central government should enact the Statutory Minimum Price Act (SMP) instead of the present minimum support price (MSP).

7 The government can make agriculture predictable with the help of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Predicting agri-market prices before sowing will definitely empower farmers.

8 In rural areas, unemployed and under-employed youth should be provided with soft loans without the guarantor and asset encumbrance.

9 The central government should look at GST and ensure that there are no taxes on production. Agricultural implements should be taken out of the tax regime.

10 The central government should establish a commission on industrial commodity cost and pricing (CICCP) on the lines of the Commission on Agriculture Cost and Pricing (CACP) to avoid price exploitation of consumers by industrialists and businessmen.

11 Agricultural commodities are trading in the buyers' market, while industrial commodities are in the sellers' market. The farmer is being exploited while he is selling his produce and purchasing for his needs. Farmers should be empowered to sell finished products rather than intermediate products, for example rice instead of paddy, flour or processed products instead of jowar, ragi grains etc.

I am of the firm opinion that sustainable agriculture is the lifeline of all the people and economy of the state.

DSPL-282

ODISHA
NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Shri Mohan Charan Majhi
Chief Minister, Odisha

UTKARSH
ODISHA
MAKE IN ODISHA CONCLAVE'25
BHUBANESWAR | 28th - 29th JAN | 2025

REGISTER NOW

TO BE PART OF ODISHA'S JOURNEY
AS THE GROWTH ENGINE OF THE NATION

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES
CULTURAL EVENTS
B2B AND B2G MEETINGS

MAKE IN ODISHA EXPO
START-UP ODISHA
VISION VIKSIT ODISHA 2036

Scan to Register

INVEST IN ODISHA, INVEST IN FUTURE

Or visit us at https://mio.investodisha.gov.in/

Investment Intention Form
Schedule a Meeting

Follow us on @InvestInOdisha /InvestOdisha

OIPR-14005/13/0019/2425

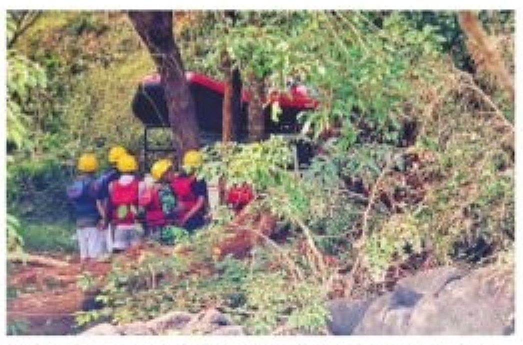
Illegal rafting on, right under authorities' nose

SUBHASH CHANDRA N S
@ Ganeshgudi (Uttara Kannada)

ILLEGAL river rafting has quietly begun in Ganeshgudi, right under the nose of the local authorities. Many tour operators have started mid-rafting and are doing it in violation of norms. Sources said that most of them do not have permission to do rafting. Several videos of illegal rafting have been doing the rounds among the locals on social media and this has created fear among tour operators and resort owners that the water sport will come to a halt like it happened earlier.

The local homestays and resorts have written letters to the authorities to prevent these illegal water sport activities, but there has been no response from the district administration so far.

Only the state-owned Jungle Lodges and Resorts is authorised to conduct rafting in Kali waters. This apart, no other organisation has been given permission to offer water sports. "We have written to the district administration, Principal Secretary, Forest Ecology and Environment, Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism, and others, but so far there is no response from anywhere. We do not want any other ugly episode, which we faced like in 2022, when rafting and all water activities were banned due to violation of norms," said a resort owner on condition of anonymity. Interestingly, a few private players are doing mid-rafting, that is for a distance of about 6 km as defined by the Department of Tourism, Uttara Kannada, which is not an authorised body to do so.


A clip shows people lining up for rafting, which is being carried out illegally in Ganeshgudi

To support this, the River Rafting and Water Sports Management and Supervision Committee, Uttara Kannada, has clearly stated that conditional permission has been granted to selected water sports, including canoeing, boating, jobbing, swimming, zip-lining and rafting on March 2. However, the firms will have to construct jetties required for their activities within 10 days. As per the letter, the permission for rafting was awarded in March 2023 for a period of one year and the same has continued since then. When contacted, Deputy Director, in-charge, Department of Tourism, said he had withdrawn the permission for mid-rafting after there were some complaints about it. SP of Uttara Kannada said he will look into the matter.

EXPRESS READ

Dalai Lama to visit Bylakuppe on Jan 5

MYSURU: After a seven-year gap, Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama will visit the Tibetan settlement in Bylakuppe on January 5. According to representatives of the Tibetan Dekyi Larsoe (TDL) settlement, the spiritual leader will depart Dharamsala on January 3 and arrive at Bylakuppe Tibetan Settlement, the second largest Tibetan settlement in India, on January 5 for an extended stay. The 89-year-old monk will be staying in Bylakuppe for a month for a restful retreat. During his stay, he will not be participating in any public meetings programmes or rituals, but will be only attending prayers. He will be in Mysuru until the Tibetan Losar festival, due to be held in the last week of February. While the Tibetan Buddhist community is making all arrangements for the visit of their spiritual leader, the police have planned elaborate security arrangements.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ರಸ್ತೆ ಸಾರಿಗೆ ನಿಗಮ
ಮಂಗಳೂರು ವಿಭಾಗ : ಮಂಗಳೂರು.

ಸಂ:ಕರಾಸ:ಮಂವಿ:ಸಂ:ವಾ:1999/2000:2024-25 ದಿನಾಂಕ:24.12.2024

ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂ. 14:2024-25
ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್/ಸಂಧಾನ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂ. 15:2024-25
(ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್/ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಸಂಧಾನ ಮೂಲಕ)

ಕ.ರಾ.ರ.ಸಾ. ನಿಗಮ, ಮಂಗಳೂರು ವಿಭಾಗದ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಗೆ ಬರುವ ಮಂಗಳೂರು ಬಸ್ಸು ನಿಲ್ದಾಣ, ಉಡುಪಿ ನಗರ ಸಾರಿಗೆ ಮತ್ತು ಡಾ. ವಿ.ಎಸ್. ಆಚಾರ್ಯ ಬಸ್ಸುನಿಲ್ದಾಣ, ಕುಂದಾಪುರ ಬಸ್ಸುನಿಲ್ದಾಣಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊಸದಾಗಿ, ಖಾಲಿ ಇರುವ ಹಾಗೂ ಇನ್ನು ಮುಂದೆ ಖಾಲಿಯಾಗಲಿರುವ ವಾಣಿಜ್ಯ ಮಳಿಗೆಗಳಿಗೆ ದ್ವಿಚಕ್ರ, ಕಾರು ಪಾರ್ಕಿಂಗ್ ನಿರ್ವಹಣೆಗೆ ಮತ್ತು ವಿಭಾಗೀಯ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಗಾರದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಉಪಹಾರ ಗೃಹ (ಸಸ್ಯಾಹಾರಿ/ಮಾಂಸಾಹಾರಿ) ಮಳಿಗೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಕಟ್ಟಿದ ಮಳಿಗೆಗಳಿಗೆ 5 ವರ್ಷದ ಅವಧಿಗೆ ತೆರೆದ ಸ್ಥಳಕ್ಕೆ 3 ವರ್ಷದ ಅವಧಿಗೆ ಪರವಾನಿಗೆ ನೀಡಲು ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಹಾಗೂ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಸಂಧಾನ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: **20.01.2025**. ಸಂಧಾನಕ್ಕೆ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ಮಳಿಗೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸುವ ಆಸಕ್ತರು ನಿಗದಿತ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಶುಲ್ಕ ಮತ್ತು ಅನ್ವಯಿಸುವ ಜಿಎಸ್‌ಟಿ (ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಕೃತ ಬ್ಯಾಂಕಿನಿಂದ ವಿಭಾಗೀಯ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಪದನಾಮಕ್ಕೆ ಪಡೆದು) ಡಿ.ಡಿ. ಮೂಲಕ ಪಾವತಿಸಿ ಅರ್ಜಿಯನ್ನು ಹಾಗೂ ಷರತ್ತು ನಿಬಂಧನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ **23.01.2025 ರಂದು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ ಪಡೆದು ಸಮಯ 12.30 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ** ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಿರುವ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಸಂಧಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಮಂಗಳೂರು ವಿಭಾಗದ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಗೆ ಬರುವ ಬೈಂದೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಹೊಸದಾಗಿ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಗೊಳ್ಳುವ ಬೈಂದೂರು ಬಸ್ಸುನಿಲ್ದಾಣದ ವಾಣಿಜ್ಯ ಮಳಿಗೆ, ಉಪಹಾರಗೃಹ (ಸಸ್ಯಾಹಾರಿ) ಮಳಿಗೆಗಳಿಗೆ (ಬಸ್ಸುನಿಲ್ದಾಣ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಗೊಂಡ / ಉದ್ಘಾಟನೆಗೊಂಡ ನಂತರ ವಾಣಿಜ್ಯ ವಹಿವಾಟಿಗೆ ಲಭ್ಯವಾಗುವುದು) ಹೊಸದಾಗಿ ಪರವಾನಿಗೆದಾರರ ಆಯ್ಕೆಗಾಗಿ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ : **03.02.2025.**

ಇ-ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಸ್ತಾವೇಜುಗಳನ್ನು ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಿಂದ ಡೌನ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬಹುದು.

ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ವಿಭಾಗ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಕ.ರಾ.ರ.ಸಾ.ನಿಗಮ, ಮಂಗಳೂರು ವಿಭಾಗ, ಬಿಜೈ, ಮಂಗಳೂರು-575004 ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಕಛೇರಿ ಅವಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಲು ಕೋರಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸುವ ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ವಿಭಾಗೀಯ ಸಂಚಾರ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ-7760990702 & ಸಹಾಯಕ ಸಂಚಾರ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪಕರು:7760990711 ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸುವುದು.

ಸಹಿ/-
ಹಿರಿಯ ವಿಭಾಗೀಯ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿ,
ಕ.ರಾ.ರ.ಸಾ.ನಿಗಮ : ಮಂಗಳೂರು.
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಾಪ್ರ/ಜಿಎ/4000/2024-25

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office : No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001. E-Mail id : crmd@cityunionbank.in, Ph : 0435-2432322, Fax : 0435-2431746
CUB TRUST AND EXCELLENCE SINCE 1904

TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

The following property/ies mortgaged to **City Union Bank Limited** will be sold in Tender-cum-Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (6) & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of **Rs.65,16,817/- (Rupees Sixty Five Lakh Sixteen Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventeen only)** as on **19-12-2024** together with further interest to be charged from **20-12-2024** onwards, other expenses and any other dues to the bank by the bank by the Borrowers / Guarantors **No.1) M/s. Sri Sai Techno Block, Survey No.23, Rampura Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Virgonagar Post, Bengaluru - 560049. Also at, M/s. Sri Sai Techno Block, Survey No.60/2, Ground Floor, Gundur Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Virgonagar Post, Bengaluru Urban - 560049. No.2) Mr. P. Madhu Sai, S/o. P. Penchalaiah, Flat No.309, 3rd Floor, Monika Espancia, Kevin Asirvatham Block, Banjara Layout, Horamavu Agara, KR Puram, Hobli, Bengaluru - 560043. No.3) Mr. P. Penchalaiah, S/o. Chinna Masthanaiah, Flat No.309, 3rd Floor, Monika Espancia, Kevin Asirvatham Block, Banjara Layout, Horamavu Agara, KR Puram Hobli, Bengaluru - 560043. No.4) Mrs. P. Rama, W/o. P. Penchalaiah, Flat No.309, 3rd Floor, Monika Espancia, Kevin Asirvatham Block, Banjara Layout, Horamavu Agara, KR Puram Hobli, Bengaluru - 560043.**

Immovable Properties Mortgaged to our Bank

Schedule - A : (Property Owned by Mr. P. Penchalaiah, S/o. Chinna Masthanaiah)

Schedule - "A" Property : All that piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing converted Survey No.65/2, New BBMP Khatha No.40/1/Survey No.65/2 (coverted for Non-Agricultural Residential purpose vide conversion order No.ALN (E) SR (Kr.H) 148/2012-13, dated 16-03-2013 issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore) situated at Horamavu Agara Village, K R Puram Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore, totally measuring 13 Guntas and bounded on : East by : Survey No.65/3, Horamavu Agara Village and Private Property, West by : Passage thereafter Mounika Espancia Apartment Block A in the Block name known as Lepakshi Block constructed on remaining portion of same Survey 65/2 measuring 13 Guntas thereafter Survey No.65/1 belongs to Mr. Yella Reddy, North by : Remaining portion of same Survey No.65/2, South by : Road formed in Survey No.65/8.

Schedule - "B" Property : 284 Sq.ft right, title and interest in the immovable property mentioned in Schedule A Property.

Schedule - "C" Property : Flat bearing No.309 in the Third Floor in Block B in the Block known as Kevin Asirvatham measuring about 1,255 sq.ft. containing three bed Rooms together with one covered car parking space in the property known as Mounika Espancia.

Reserve Price : Rs.65,00,000/-
(Rupees Sixty Five Lakh only)

Schedule - B : (Property Owned by Mrs. P. Rama, W/o. P. Penchalaiah)

All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Residential Site No.33, Old Property No.55, New Property No.55/-P15, Marenahalli Village, Panchayat Katha No. 815/55/33, situated at Marasandra Village, Jala Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk. Measuring : East to West 50 feet, North to South 30 feet, Totally measuring 1,500 Sq.feet and bounded on : East by : Road, West by : Site No.36, North by : Site No.34, South by : Site No.32. Together with the superstructure now existing and to be putup there on in future.

Reserve Price : Rs.24,00,000/-
(Rupees Twenty Four Lakh only)

AUCTION DETAILS

Date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale	Venue
05-02-2025	City Union Bank Limited, Hoskote Branch, 6th Cross, Thamme Gowda (TG) Layout, Opp.Hoskote Mission Hospital & Channakeshava Petrol Bunk, Hoskote, Bengaluru Rural - 562114. Cell No.7397789907.

Terms and Conditions of Tender-cum-Auction Sale :
(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself/ herself. **(2)** The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from **The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Hoskote Branch, 6th Cross, Thamme Gowda (TG) Layout, Opp. Hoskote Mission Hospital & Channakeshava Petrol Bunk, Hoskote, Bengaluru Rural - 562114. (3)** The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to **The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd.**, together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of **10%** of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of **"City Union Bank Ltd.", on or before 12.00 Noon** on the date of Tender-cum Auction Sale hereby notified. **(4)** For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact **Cell No.7397789907. (5)** The property/ies are sold on "As-is-where-is", "As-is-what-is" and "whatever-there is" basis. **(6)** The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at **01.00 p.m. for Schedule - A Property & 03.00 p.m. for Schedule - B Property** on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Though in general the sale will be by way of closed tenders, the Authorised Officer may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the closed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. **(7)** The successful bidder shall have to pay **25% (inclusive of EMD paid)** of the sale amount **immediately** on completion of sale and the balance amount of **75%** within **15 days** from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of **25%** shall be forfeited. **(8)** The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. **(9)** The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. **(10)** The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. **(11)** The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Place : Kumbakonam, Date : 27-12-2024 Authorised Officer

Regd. Office : 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001, CIN - L65110TN1904PLC001287, Telephone No. 0435-2402322, Fax : 0435-2431746, Website : www.cityunionbank.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client proposed to purchase the schedule property from **Smt.H.V.Padmavathi**, W/o. Sri S.V.Kariyappa, D/o. Sri.D. Venkatesh, Aged about 56 years, Residing at No.53, A.V.R. Road, J.C. Extension, Kanakapura, Ramanagar District-562117.

That if any person/s, Bank/s, Authorities have any objections for the proposed sale transactions or claims any kind whatsoever on the schedule property may lodge their claims/objections with documentary proof within (7) Seven days from the date of publication of this notice with the undersigned, thereafter my client shall proceed to complete the sale transaction and any claims received thereafter will not be entertained.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of Property bearing Site No.549, New BBMP Khatha No.549/549, in the layout approved by BDA Vide Resolution No.502, BDA dt.24.04.1987, Vide Order No.BDA/TPM/W/125/87-88, dt.22.05.1987, formed in Sy.Nos. 41/1B, 37/1 to 6, 12 to 15, 41B Part, 41/1C, 1D, 1F, 1G, 1H, 11 and 1J, 27/1, 41/2, 3, 4, 5 of Sregandada Kaval Village, Yeshwanthpura Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk, layout formed by the Health and Family Welfare Services and Medical Education Employees House Building Co-Operative Society Ltd., now comes under jurisdiction of Bruhath Bengaluru Mahangara Palike Ward No. 129, Bengaluru called as H & F Layout measuring East to West 30 feet and North to South 40 feet in all measuring about 1200 sq feet and bounded on: **East by:** Site No.548, **West by:** Site No.550, **North by:** 60 feet Road, **South by:** Site No.530

GIRISH, Advocate
No.29/30, 58th Cross, 4th Block, Rajajinagar, Bangalore-560010.
Mobile:9845540992, Date:28-12-2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

The **GENERAL PUBLIC** are hereby informed that my Client **Smt. SHEEJA. M. K.** W/o.Manoj.P. Residing at No. 61/3/1, Krishna Temple Road, Vidyaranyapura Post, BANGALORE-560 097. Has lost the original Sale Deed dated **03.09.1970** with vide Document No.**1859/1970-71** executed by Ramaiah in favour of Subbamma and the said **SALE DEED** was registered at the office of the Sub-Registrar Bangalore North. Pertaining to the below mentioned **SCHEDULE PROPERTY.** The said original document is not in the possession of my client and the same has been intimated to the Jurisdictional Police. Whoever is in possession of the same is hereby requested to hand over it to the below mentioned address. If anyone deals with such persons on the SCHEDULE PROPERTY shall be doing so at his/her own risk and consequences and the same shall not be binding on my Client.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Residential Property bearing **Site No.01**, Katha No.61/3/1, situated at Doddabommasandra Village, Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Bangalore, measuring **East to West: 40 Feet and North to South: 30 Feet** measuring 1200 Square Feet. And bounded on

East By : Property belongs to Sr. Chikkavenkatappa
West By : 20 Feet Road
North By : Site bearing No. 02
South By : Private Property.

Sri.B.B.SUDHIR, Advocate
No:334, 09th Main, 14th Cross, Indiranagar, BANGALORE-560038
Mob: 98450 22593

IN THE COURT OF IV ADDL. MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL :: NELLORE, AP
I.A.No. 139 / 2024
M.V.O.P.No. 702 /2021
1.Cheedella Sujathamma and another ... Petitioners/Claimants
Vs
1. Basavaraju S.C. and 3 others .. Respondents/Respondents

NOTICE TO 4TH RESPONDENT

Nijalingappa, Son of Dyamanna, resident of 136-A, Kithaganahalli, Chandapur Circle, Tataiah Ashramam, Anelkul, Karnataka.

Please take notice that the above petitioners/Claimants filed the above I.A.No.139/2024 in M.V.O.P. No.702/2021 for implead the 4th respondent/proposed respondent as 4th respondent and carryout the amendment the main petition. The I.A.No.139/2024 is posted to **03.01.2025** for your appearance. You are required to appear before the Hon'ble Tribunal on **03.01.2025** at 10.30 AM either in person or an Advocate, failing which the matter will be decided in your absence.

P.Uma Maheswar, B.COM., B.L.
Advocate for the petitioners, Nellore.

BEFORE THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II AT BANGALORE

Original Application No.354/2024

CANARA BANK, Kodigehalli Branch ...Applicant
Versus
Sri R. Nagesh Achary & Another ...Defendants

SUMMONS /NOTICE TO DEFENDANT UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF RECOVERY OF DEBTS AND BANKRUPTCY ACT 1993, BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION

To, Defendant No. 1

Sri R. Nagesh Achary, Properitor of M/s Prajwal Solar Systems, S/o. V Rudrachary Aged about 46 Years, R/at 51/1, Marasandra Village, Doddatumkur Post, Hesarabhatta Hovli, Doddaballapura Road, Bangalore - 560 064.

Whereas, the Applicant has instituted an Application under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 against you for recovery of a sum of **Rs.1,42,61,217/-** (Rupees One Crore forty two lakhs sixty one thousand two hundred seventeen Only) mentioned therein together with current and future interest and other reliefs. The above defendant is therefore, hereby directed to appear before the Tribunal in person or through an advocate or through authorised agents in support of their defense within 30 days from the date of publication or on **11.03.2025 at 10.30 am** as to why reliefs prayed for should not be granted.

Take notice that in case of default, the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal, on this the **28.11.2024.**

Sd/- Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal -II Bangalore
Advocate for Applicant Bank
Mrs. Malini Vinay

BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - II AT BANGALORE

Case No : O.A. No.1994/2023

Summons under sub-section(4) of Section 19 of the Act, read with Sub - Rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules,1993

Between : State Bank of India, SARB Bangalore ...Applicant
And:
Sri Hanumantharayappa M & Another ....Defendants

SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES 1993.

To :1) Sri Hanumantharayappa M S/o. Sri Muthurayappa, Aged about 54 years

2)Smt.Laxmidevamma W/o. Hanumantha rayappa, Aged about 48 years.

Both are R/o No. 74, Shanthi Nagara, Doddaballapur, Bangalore Rural - 561 203.

Whereas, this Applicant has instituted an application under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993, against the Defendant(s) you for recovery of a sum **Amount of debt in Rs. 23,42,918/-** Defendant(s) is/are therefore hereby directed to appear before this Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or duly authorized agent, in support of his/their defence to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on **06.02.2025 at 10:30 a.m.** (forenoon) as to why reliefs prayed for should not be granted.

Take notice that in case of default, the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal on this the **7th day of October 2024.**

By order of the Tribunal
Sd/- Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal - II

BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - II, AT BANGALORE
BSNL Building, 4th Floor, Telephone House, Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore–560 001.
O.A. No.674 / 2024

State Bank of India Constitued under the State Bank of India Act 1955, Having its Corporate Office at Mumbai and amongst other Branches one called RACPC St' Marks Road, Bangalore- Represented by Chief Manager, Stressed Assets Recovery Branch, at No.11/90, 3rd Floor, Near old Shivaji Talikes J.C Road, Bangalore- 560 002, H.V. Raviprakash, Ph. No. 080 - 25943663, Mobile No.94498 42910 E- Mail- sbi.05173 @sbi.co.in, IFSC Code SBIN0005173. ...Applicant

V/s

Sri Ranjeeth Kumar Ojha, Aged about 33 years, S/o. Sri Ram Ujagar Ojha Flat No. B-101, Ground Floor, Block/Building No. B ' Artha Midas' Bagalur Village, NSC, Sulibele Hobli, Bengaluru - 562 114. DOB- 08/10/1991, PAN No. ABNPO9709J
And also at :
i. T-24/22, DLF Phase-3, Radhye Krishna Bhavan, Near Sai Temple Gurugam-122010, Haryana.
ii. BT Global Business Service Pvt. Ltd., Building - 14, Sector-24, DLF Phase-3, Metro, Gurugam - 122010, Haryana.
iii. 'Gurupurwa' Parsa Dondari Gonda- 271 126, Uttara Pradesh

SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES

Sri Ranjeeth Kumar Ojha, Aged about 33 years, S/o. Sri Ram Ujagar Ojha Flat No. B-101, Ground Floor, Block/Building No. B ' Artha Midas' Bagalur Village, NSC, Sulibele Hobli, Bengaluru - 562 114. DOB- 08/10/1991, PAN No. ABNPO9709J
And also at :
i. T-24/22, DLF Phase-3, Radhye Krishna Bhavan, Near Sai Temple Gurugam-122010, Haryana.
ii. BT Global Business Service Pvt. Ltd., Building - 14, Sector-24, DLF Phase-3, Metro, Gurugam - 122010, Haryana.
iii. 'Gurupurwa' Parsa Dondari Gonda- 271 126, Uttara Pradesh

Whereas, the applicant has instituted an application under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act,1993 against the defendant for recovery of a Sum of **Rs.30,50,350.00** (Rupees Thirty Lakhs Fifty Thousand Three Hundred and Fifty Only), together with current and future interest an for other reliefs.

The above mentioned defendant is therefore hereby directed to appear before the Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or duly authorized agent in support of the defense to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on **28.04.2025 at 10:30 A.M,** as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default, the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal, on this **09th day of December 2024.**

Sd/- Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal -II, Bangalore- 560 001
Advocate for the Applicant
T. S Krishna Murthy, No. 64/1, Dr. D. V. G Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore - 04.

कॆनरा बैंक Canara Bank
(A Government of India Undertaking)
ATTIBELE BRANCH (DP:3468),
No: 728 A, Sree Laxmi Complex, Sarjapura Road, Attibele, Pin code-562107, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District.
Ph: 7871444526, e-mail: cb3468@canarabank.com

(Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Property)

SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable / movable Property under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical (Strike whichever is not applicable) possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **Attibele Branch (3468)** of the **Canara Bank**, will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is"** on **31.01.2025**, for recovery of below mentioned amount.

E-AUCTION DATE : 31.01.2025

Borrower(s): (1) Smt.Pushpavathi W/o Venkatesh, **(2) Sri Venkatesh K** S/o Krishnappa, **Both are Residing at:** K-No.57, Yallamma Nilaya, Upkar Solitare, Next to Shakamba, Attibele, Bangalore-562107.

Total liabilities: **Rs.29,39,828.63** (Rupees Twenty Nine Lakh Thirty Nine Thousands Eight Hundred Twenty Eight And Paisa Sixty Three Only) as on **20.12.2024** with further interest and charges thereon.

The reserve price will be **Rs.98,94,613.00** (Rupees Ninety Eight Lakh Ninety Four Thousands Six Hundred Thirteen Only) and the earnest money deposit will be **Rs.9,89,500.00** (Rupees Nine Lakh Eighty Nine Thousands Five Hundred Only).

The Earnest Money Deposit shall be deposited on or before 30.01.2025 by 4.00 PM.

Details and full description of the Immovable property:
Title Holder: Smt. Pushpavathi & Sri Venkatesh K

All that piece and parcel of vacant site No.93, in layout known as UPKAR GREENVIEWS formed in Sy.No.56/2 of Manchenahalli Village, Attibele Hobli, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru District, vide Khatha No.1268/93 and E-Swathu No.150200101700320462 and the same is converted from agriculture to Non agriculture residential purpose vide conversion order bearing No. ALN(A)SR/237/2013-14, dated 17.02.2016, passed by the Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru District, Bengaluru and vide plan sanctioned by Satellite Town Ring Road Planning Authority (STRRPA) vide bearing No.STRRPA/TP/LAO/44/2017-18, dated 26.02.2018 and revised plan dated 23.11.2020 and project approved by Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Karnataka (RERA) vide No. PRM/KA/RERA/1251/308/PR/180420/001510, dated 28.02.2018 measuring East to West 10.40 Mtrs and North to South 15.24 Mtrs totally 158.50 Sq mtrs. Totally measuring 1706 Sft. Bounded on the: East by: Road, West by: Site No.92, North by: Road, South by: Path way.

Known encumbrances, if any: Not to the knowledge of the Bank.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer the link **"E-Auction"** provided in **Canara Bank's** website **(www.canarabank.com)** or may contact **Authorised Officer, Canara Bank, Attibele Branch** or contact the service provider **E-bkray (M/s PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd), support.baanknet@psballiance.com during office hours on any working day**

Date : 28.12.2024 Sd/- Authorised Officer
Place: Bengaluru Canara Bank

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is represented to the Undersigned that **Sri. Harsha Vardhan. B. P.**, residing at #260, 32nd Main, 17th Cross, J P Nagar 6th Phase, Bengaluru 560078, has lost/misplaced the original General Power of Attorney dated 01.09.1995, registered as document bearing No.394/95-96, on 07/09/1995, executed by **Sri. Subramani S/o Balasubramaniyam,** in favour of, **Smt. Girija W/o B. Prabhakar Naidu**, related to Site bearing No.260, Corporation No. 260, situated at 32nd Main Road, 6th Phase, J. P. Nagar, Bangalore. After his best efforts to search he could not trace the same. In this regard, our client has registered Lost Report bearing No. 1403652/2024, dated 28/12/2024, before Karnataka State Police.

It is further represented that he has not mortgaged, created any lien or encumbered the aforesaid property in any manner or pledged the original as security to any loans/borrowings. Any person/s in possession of the aforesaid original documents shall return the same to the Undersigned or lodge their claims with documentary evidence within **seven (7) days** from the date of this notice.

Vinod. R., ADVOCATE,
STERLING LAW ASSOCIATES,
#1656, Balaji Nilayam, 1st Cross, Mariyappanpalya, Rajajinagar, Bangalore-560021. Ph : 91+7411531524
Place: Bengaluru Date: 29/12/2024

BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - II, AT BANGALORE
BSNL Building, 4th Floor, Telephone House, Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore–560 001.
O.A. No.635/ 2024

State Bank of India Constitued under the State Bank of India Act 1955, Having its Corporate Office at Mumbai and amongst other Branches one called RACPC St' Marks Road, Bangalore- Represented by Chief Manager, Stressed Assets Recovery Branch, at No.11/90, 3rd Floor, Near old Shivaji Talikes J.C Road, Bangalore- 560 002, N. Nagendra, Ph. No. 080 - 25943663, Mobile No.94498 42910 E- Mail- sbi.05173 @sbi.co.in, IFSC Code SBIN0005173. ..Applicant

V/s

Kusum Lata, Aged about 28 years, D/o. Sri Goverdhan Singh, No. 103, ' B Block' 1st Floor, Aswini Aaeesha Apartment, Rayasandra, Dodda Nagamangala, Electronic City Phase-II, Bengaluru - 560 100. DOB- 21/09/1996, PAN No. APGPL3264A
And also at :
i. Employee ID No. ATPL246048, Altruist Technologies Pvt Ltd., No. 4,5,6, Garvebhavi Palya, Behind R.N.S. Motors, Bengaluru - 560 068.
ii. 'Garden Residency' Flat No. F-307, 2nd Floor, F- Block, No. 108/3, 108/2, Kachanayakanahalli Village, Hennagara Village Panchayat, Anekal Taluk, Benglauru - 560 105
iii. No. 72, Kandara Chamoli - 546 488, Uttarakhand.

SUMMONS ISSUED UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES

Kusum Lata, Aged about 28 years, D/o. Sri Goverdhan Singh, No. 103, ' B Block' 1st Floor, Aswini Aaeesha Apartment, Rayasandra, Dodda Nagamangala, Electronic City Phase-II, Bengaluru - 560 100. DOB- 21/09/1996, PAN No. APGPL3264A
And also at :
i. Employee ID No. ATPL246048, Altruist Technologies Pvt Ltd., No. 4,5,6, Garvebhavi Palya, Behind R.N.S. Motors, Bengaluru - 560 068.
ii. 'Garden Residency' Flat No. F-307, 2nd Floor, F- Block, No. 108/3, 108/2, Kacha nayakana halli Village, Hennagara Village Panchayat, Anekal Taluk, Benglauru - 560 105
iii. No. 72, Kandara Chamoli - 546 488, Uttarakhand.

Whereas, the applicant has instituted an application under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act,1993 against the defendant for recovery of a Sum of **Rs.70,20,116.00** (Rupees Seventy Lakhs Twenty Thousand One Hundred and Sixteen Only), together with current and future interest an for other reliefs.

The above mentioned defendant is therefore hereby directed to appear before the Tribunal in person or through an Advocate or duly authorized agent in support of the defense to show cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on **28.04.2025 at 10:30 A.M,** as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted. Take notice that in case of default, the application will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal, on this **09th day of December 2024.**

Sd/- Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal -II, Bangalore- 560 001
Advocate for the Applicant
T. S Krishna Murthy, No. 64/1, Dr. D. V. G Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore - 04.

BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II, AT BENGALURU
4th Floor, BSNL Building Telephone House, Rajbhavan Road, Bangalore - 560 001
O.A. No.424/2024

Between: Canara Bank, having its Head-Office at No. 112, J. C. Road, Bangalore - 560 002 and One of its Branch Offices at Madiwala, No. 21/01, Hosur Main Road, Madiwala, Bangalore - 560 068, represented by its Agent and Chief Manager Muraliraj K., S/o. Kanagaraj K., cb1074@canarabank.com ....Applicant
And
M/s. NAXSA INDIA, No. 212 B, Daadys Southburg, Kammasandra Road, Hebbagodi, Bengaluru - 560 100. by its Prop.: Nilofer Anwer, D/o. Arif Khan, No. 53144, Prestige Falcon City, Konanakunte Cross, Kanakapura Road, Bengaluru - 560 062. ...Defendant

SUMMONS / NOTICE ISSUED TO DEFENDANT UNDER RULE 23(VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES, 1993 BY WAY OF PAPER PUBLICATION

1. **Whereas**, the Applicant has instituted an Application U/S 19 of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 against you for the recovery of a sum of **Rs.33,50,483.34 ps** (Rupees Thrity Three Lakhs Fifty Thousand Four Hundred and Eighty Three and Paise Thirty Four Only) together with cost and future interest and other reliefs.
2. You are hereby required to show cause within 30 days of the service of the summons or on **02.04.2025** at **11.00 AM** in the forenoon in person or by a pleader / Advocate duly instructed as to why the relief prayed for should not be granted.
3. Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day mentioned herein, before, the proceeding will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal, on this the **03.12.2024**

Order of the Tribunal
Sd/- Signature of the Officer
Authorised to issue Summons

The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd
KMML
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking) Sankaramangalam, Kollam-691 583
Phone: 0476-2651215 to 2651217, e-mail: md@kmml.com, URL: www.kmml.com

TENDER NOTICE

For more details, please visit E-Tendering Portal, https://etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.kmml.com

Sl No.	Tender ID	Items
1	2024_KMML_718010_1	For the supply of Shell and Tube Condensers/ Heat Exchangers
2	2024_KMML_717670_1	For the supply of Ladle Furnace-Resistance Heating 3 Zone
3	2024_KMML_718041_1	AMC for rewinding of LT induction motors at TP unit of KMML
4	2024_KMML_720298_1	For the supply of Plate Inconnel-0.5 MT

Chavara 27.12.2024 Sd/- Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Only through e-procurement portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from registered Agencies for the following works:

Office of the Chief Engineer (Kaveri-Operation & Maintenance), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru-560009

Sl. No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to tender / EMD (in Rs.)	Last Date & Time for Submission of Tender	Date & Time for Opening of Tender
1	(Kaveri-O&M-1)	BWSSB/EE(K-O&M)-1/PB/2408/ 2024-25 Date: 21.12.2024	Rs.78.25 Lakhs / Rs.1,56,500/-	13.01.2025 upto 4:00 PM	14.01.2025 after 4:00 PM
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (Kaveri-O&M-1)
2	(Kaveri-O&M-2)	BWSSB/EE(K-O&M)-2/PB/2660/ 2024-25 Date: 21.12.2024 (Call-2)	Rs.68.98 Lakhs / Rs.1,38,000/-	16.01.2025 upto 4:00 PM	17.01.2025 after 4:00 PM
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (Kaveri-O&M-2)

Office of the Chief Engineer (Design & QA), 9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bengaluru - 560009

Sl. No.	Division	IFT Number	Amount put to tender / EMD (in Rs.)	Last Date & Time for Submission of Tender	Date & Time for Opening of Tender
3	Quality Assurance	BWSSB/EQATE/PB/1063/2024-25 Date: 23.12.2024	Rs.79,92,911/- / Rs.1,59,900/-	06.01.2025 upto 5:30 PM	08.01.2025 at 12:00 PM
					Sd/- Executive Engineer (Quality Assurance)

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurment process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/BCPL/3996/2024-25

BHARATIYA RESERVE BANK NOTE MUDRAN (P) LIMITED
(Wholly owned subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India)
P.O.: RBNML, Salboni - 721132, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal
Phone No. 03227-280176 / 280317; Fax No. 03227-280744 / 280222

OPEN TENDER ENQUIRY (OTE)/NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (NCB)

Bids are invited under Two-Part bidding system for the following e-Tender through MSTC Portal: -
1. **DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, COMMISSIONING, PERFORMANCE TESTING AND TRAINING OF KNIFE EDGE GRINDING MACHINE WITH ACCESSSORIES AND BUYBACK OF EXISTING KNIFE EDGE GRINDING MACHINE AT BRBNMPL, SALBONI; MSTC EVENT NO. BRBNMPL/SALBONI PRESS/MMD/42/24-25/ET/77 [KNIFE EDGE GRINDING MACHINE]; BRBNMPL TENDER NO. 018/SAL/PUR/2024-25; [ESTIMATED COST – ₹150.00 LAKH]**

Last date of tender submission – **21.02.2025 by 11:00 Hrs.** For downloading tender document and other details, kindly visit website **www.mstcecommerce.com**. Tender details are also available at our website **www.brbnmpl.co.in**. Further extension or amendment/s, if any, shall be uploaded on the above websites.

Senior General Manager

BHARAT COKING COAL LIMITED
(A Mini Ratna Company)
(A subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
BCCL Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

NOTICE

All the tenders* issued by Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of BCCL **www.bcclweb.in**, Coal India Limited (CIL) e-procurement portal **https://coalindiatenders.nic.in** and Central Public Procurement Portal **https://eprocure.gov.in**. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal **https://gem.gov.in**.

*This is applicable to all Open (Domestic / Global) Tenders issued through e-procurement portal of CIL.

TECH DRIVE CONSULTANTS PRIVATE LIMITED
CIN: U42909KA2023PTC171616
REGD. OFF: Flat No-D-601, Century Central, K.K. Cross, Kanakapura Main Road, Bengaluru, Konanakunte, Bangalore South, Karnataka, 560062
E-Mail: rrsb2004@gmail.Com

NOTICE
Form No. INC-26
[Pursuant to Rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014]
BEFORE THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR, SOUTH EAST REGION, BANGALORE

In the matter of the sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 and clause (a) of sub-rule 5 of Rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014
AND
In the matter of M/s Tech Drive Consultants Private Limited ("The Company") having its registered office at Flat No-D-601, Century Central, K.K. Cross, Kanakapura Main Road, Bengaluru, Konanakunte, Bangalore South, Karnataka, 560062 ....Petitioner.

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the Company proposes to make an application to the

Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Company by passing a special resolution in Extra-Ordinary General Meeting held on 10th December, 2024 to enable the Company to change its registered office from **"State of Karnataka"** to the **"State of Rajasthan."**

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the Company may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form or caused to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objection supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and ground of opposition to the Regional Director South East Region at the address Flat No-D-601, Century Central, K.K. Cross, Kanakapura Main Road, Bangalore, Konanakunte, Bangalore South, Karnataka, 560062 within fourteen days of the date of publication of this notice with copy to the applicant Company as its registered office/corporate office at the address mentioned below:

Registered Office:
Flat No-D-601, Century Central
K.K. Cross, Kanakapura, Main Road,
Bengaluru, Konanakunte, Bangalore South, Karnataka-560062
Dated: 30-12-2024

For and on behalf of the Applicant
M/S TECH DRIVE CONSULTANTS PRIVATE LIMITED
sd/- Ashish Singhvi, Director
DIN-09200866

All the news. In just a click. Log to www.newindianexpress.com THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

The Sabarimala Ayappa temple will be opened on Monday for the 21-day Makaravilakku season, marking the concluding phase of the annual pilgrimage season. Melsanthi Arunkumar Nampoothiri will open the sreekovil at 5 pm in the presence of thantri Kandararu Brahmadathan

ENDING TUMULTUOUS TENURE, GUV KHAN BIDS FAREWELL TO KERALA

He will assume office as Bihar Governor; CM Pinarayi, ministers don't see him off

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @T'Puram

AFTER a tumultuous tenure at the Kerala Raj Bhavan that witnessed frequent conflicts with the state government, outgoing Governor Arif Mohammed Khan left the state on Sunday to assume the office of the Governor of Bihar.

Citing an official mourning on account of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's death, the state government did not hold any official farewell programme for Khan. Neither the Chief Minister nor any of his cabinet colleagues visited the Raj Bhavan to see off the governor. Khan was given a ceremonial guard of honour before his departure.

Emotional scenes were witnessed as Khan held some of the staff close to him before departing, while a few of the staff members touched his feet as a mark of respect. Chief Secretary Sarada Muraleedharan, State Election Commissioner A Shajahan, ADGP (Law and Order) Manoj Abaraham, Thiruvananthapuram District Collector Anu Kumari and City Police Commissioner G Sparjan Kumar were among those present to see off the governor.

A Raj Bhavan staffer touches the feet of outgoing Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan at the domestic terminal of Thiruvananthapuram airport | B P DEEPU

Notably, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his cabinet colleagues had escorted Khan's predecessor P Sathasivam to the airport during his departure from the state five years ago. However, only the Governor's security detail and Raj Bhavan staff escorted Khan to the airport.

Meanwhile, Student Federation of India (SFI) activists, who had faced the Governor's wrath many times for their street protests against him, waved farewell to Khan as his motorcade passed Pettah junction en route to the airport. Khan, however, chose to steer clear of any controversies during his departure.

Beginning his brief address in Malayalam, Khan said, "My term has come to an end. But, Kerala has a very special place in my heart. And, my feelings, my association with Kerala is not going to come to an end. It is a lifelong bond now."

Khan added that he was full of gratitude for all the love, affection and support the people of the state had given him.

When reporters asked about his strained relationship with the LDF government over various issues, including the appointment of vice-chancellors of universities, Khan said that he had only exercised the authority which has been entrusted upon the governor as chancellor by the state assembly.

When asked why no official farewell was accorded to him, Khan said it was not the ideal time as the whole country was mourning the passing away of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. On questions comparing him with his predecessor Sathasivam, Khan said they were different individuals and their style of working was also different.

While Khan would assume office of the Governor of Bihar in the coming days, Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, outgoing Governor of Bihar, would take charge as the new Kerala Governor on January 2. Khan, who was appointed by the BJP-ruled Centre as the Kerala Governor in September 2019, had a bitter feud with the LDF government right from the beginning of his tenure. It was Khan's interventions in the higher education sector, particularly in university appointments, that turned into major flashpoints between him and the Pinarayi Vijayan government.

Blood-soaked footwear lying below the stage at Kochi's Jawaharlal Nehru International Stadium where MLA Uma Thomas (inset) fell from a height of 15-ft | A SANESH

Cong MLA in Kerala sustains serious head injury after 15-ft fall

KRISHNA KUMAR KE @ Kochi

UMA Thomas, the Congress MLA representing Thrikkakara, suffered grave head and internal injuries after she fell from a 15-ft-high dais at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kochi where she had arrived to attend a mega dance programme on Sunday evening. She is currently on ventilator support, the doctors said. The incident took place around 6pm, when the MLA was proceeding towards the dais before the inauguration of the dance event that was attended by Cultural Affairs Minister Saji Cherian.

"The MLA was proceeding to sit at one side of the front row, when she suddenly greeted someone at the dais where Minister Saji Cherian and the dignitaries were sitting. As she began to move, there was only a small gap, around 1.5 ft, between the chairs at the dais and the ribbon marking its boundary. She suddenly lost balance and gripped the ribbon barricade for support, but it gave way," said Martin, an employee of Doordarshan who was at the spot. Though initial reports said the MLA fell from a height of 20 ft, the doctors said it was 15-ft fall. They said the MLA was on ventilator support, but her condition was stable.

"The MLA doesn't need any emergency surgery as of now. She has been ventilated. She has suffered fractures in the ribs, which has led to bleeding in the lungs. The only major procedure that needs to be performed is insertion of a tube in the chest to drain the accumulating blood. She has also suffered fractures in the nasal bone and the skull," said Dr Mishal Johny, neurosurgeon, Renai Medicity, where Uma is undergoing treatment.

A medical bulletin from the hospital said the CT scan revealed Grade 2 Diffuse Axonal injury (a moderate traumatic brain injury). It said further information about the MLA's condition could only be relayed after a 24-hour observation period.

Explaining how the accident happened, a police officer said: "A ribbon had been tied at one end of the dais to cordon off people. The MLA reached the area and was having a conversation with a group who greeted her. Suddenly, she lost balance and fell on a concrete platform 15 ft below. Blood started oozing out of her head and she was rushed to a city hospital in an ambulance stationed at the venue."

Sudheesh, who among the audience members, said the MLA had been unconscious and bleeding profusely.

"She was lying motionless as onlookers rushed to her aid. I was shocked to see her fall from that height. It happened right in front of me. There was an ambulance outside the stadium and she was rushed to the hospital without delay. A doctor, who was already on the spot, accompanied the MLA," he told *TNIE*. Martin said the temporary 'barricade' was made by tying a ribbon to a three-leg pole-stand and was not fixed to the floor, and would have easily given way. *(With inputs from Anu Kuruvilla)*

Ties with communists go beyond polls: Stalin

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE ideological ties between the Dravidian movement and communists go beyond elections and both have stood by each other for decades, said Chief Minister M K Stalin on Sunday, during an event held in the city to felicitate prominent CPI leader and centenarian R Nallakannu.

"Our political ties may have been suspended at times, but our ideological bond will continue under any and all circumstances. The friendship between the Dravidian and communist movements is beyond electoral politics and based on ideology," Stalin said, adding that the event, organised by Tamil nationalist leader Pazha Nedumaran and others, was a confluence of the Dravidian, communist and Tamil nationalist movements.

On the camaraderie between the two political camps, the CM recalled that it was Periyar who translated the Communist Manifesto into Tamil for the first time. When Periyar launched the self-respect movement, communist leader M Singaravelar provided essential support and the late P Jeevanandham, whose beginnings were with the self-respect wave, went on to become a prominent CPI leader, Stalin noted.

"Former CM M Karunanidhi once said he would have been with the Communist party had the Dravidian movement not taken shape," he added.

Democratic forces working together against autocracy and majoritarianism could be the only befitting birthday gift to Nallakannu, Stalin said.

TN CM MK Stalin presents CPI leader R Nallakannu a memento during an event celebrating the latter's centenary in Chennai on Sunday | ASHWIN PRASATH

Can't be blamed for stampede: Theatre owners

ENS @ Hyderabad

THE management of the Sandhya Theatre has reportedly told the Hyderabad Police that it can in no way be blamed for the stampede on December 4 that claimed the life of a woman and left a boy battling for life since a major movie production house was managing the security for the premiere of *Pushpa-2: The Rule*.

In its six-page reply to the December 12 show cause notice sent by the city police asking why the theatre should not be sealed, the management has reportedly said that there have been frequent visits by movie stars and premiere shows and nothing untoward had occurred since the premises has ample parking space.

In the show cause notice, the police had posed 11 questions to the theatre management and sought a reply within 10 days.

FOR THE NEW YEAR...

With 2025 approaching, people buy calendars in Bengaluru's Malleswaram on Sunday | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

'Pregnant women should be monitored to find risks'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

EXPLAINING major fatal complications, Dr Ramesh highlighted amniotic fluid embolism (AFE), which occurs when amniotic fluid enters the mother's bloodstream, triggering a severe allergic-like reaction. This event can lead to sudden cardiovascular collapse, respiratory distress and disseminated intravascular coagulation (DIC) that affects the blood's ability to clot. Moreover, postpartum haemorrhage remains a major reason behind maternal deaths, he added.

Doctors also suggested that analysis is needed to determine whether the patient was a booked or unbooked case (those who received regular antenatal care are categorised as booked, while those who did not are unbooked), whether they were under follow-up until delivery and if the delivery was normal or a C-section. Maternal deaths occurring shortly after delivery may point to causes like anaphylaxis, AFE or PPH, while deaths after a few days mostly indicate complications linked to pre-existing conditions.

Experts said maternal deaths in government hospitals are common among women from poor backgrounds and those coming from district centres. Many delay getting care because they have to travel, which leads to serious complications. Most of these deaths are also seen in women having their third child or more.

Explaining the situation at government hospitals, Dr Savita C, Medical Superintendent at Vani Vilas Hospital, highlighted that women are advised to visit three times a week for antenatal or pregnancy-related care, but many do not show up. Moreover, most maternal deaths occur due to anaemia, but the condition remains untreated because women do not seek medical care for iron supplements or injections.

Regular monitoring of pregnant women through prenatal visits can identify risks and early intervention can prevent complications that could lead to death, she said.

A public health expert, however, said negligence and insufficient training of healthcare professionals, specifically in government hospitals, have been a significant factor contributing to maternal deaths. Inadequate training and lack of experience among healthcare workers can lead to delays in recognising and managing complications during pregnancy and childbirth, resulting in preventable fatalities.

MATERNAL DEATHS

The highest number of 217 deaths were reported in just four months

Aug	54
Sept	49
Oct	57
Nov	57

179 In government hospitals

38 In private hospitals

November saw 1.42 cr domestic passengers taking to the skies

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

THE number of domestic flyers across the country touched 1.42 crore in November 2024, a 11.9% increase compared to the corresponding period last year. The traffic data for domestic airlines has been made public by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

The DGCA report , released last week, said that in comparison, 1.27 crore passengers took to the skies in November 2023. IndiGo dominated the market carrying 177.1 lakh flyers, accounting for 63.5% of the domestic market. Air India came a far second with 21.9% of the market share (61.21 lakh flyers).

A total of 624 passenger complaints were received by the domestic airlines during last month, which puts the number of complaints per 10,000 passengers at 0.44.

The Gurugram-based airline FlyBig has received the maximum number of complaints, 20.7 per 10,000 passengers, while IndiGo has received the minimum number of complaints – 0.2 per 10,000 flyers.

Of the complaints received, the majority (34.3%) pertained to flight-related issues. Missing baggage came next with 25.3% of complaints, while refund came third with 13.8% complaints.

The overall cancellation rate across airlines stood at 1.25% with FlyBig's rate at 36.71%. Alliance Air stood second at 4.23%. Unsuitable weather was the chief reason for cancellations and 27,577 passengers were impacted because of this, the report said.

In all, 3,539 flyers were denied boarding with Air India not permitting 3,335 of passengers to take the flight. Overall, Rs 2.84 crore was spent by airlines towards compensation and facilities for passengers. Delay in flight journeys resulted in 2.24 lakh passengers suffering with a sum of Rs 2.89 crore spent towards their assistance.

Anna univ to get 'women warrior' groups in campus

BINITA JAISWAL @Chennai

FOLLOWING the sexual assault of a student on its Guindy campus last week, Anna University is set to form a groups of 'women warriors' to help build confidence among students to approach deans, heads of departments and other faculty members to resolve their issues, be they related to sexual harassment or academics.

Two faculty members and four students from each year of the course in every department will be selected and enrolled as women warriors under the university's Centre for Empowerment of Women.

The centre will guide the team in planning and executing training programmes and awareness sessions among students to encourage them to raise their voice against any kind of harassment or misconduct.

SHINING STAR

B'luru teen bags 6 medals at nat'l shooting event

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a remarkable feat, 18-year-old Abishek Sekhar from Bengaluru created history by becoming the first shooter from Karnataka to win six medals at the 67th National Shooting Championship Competitions (NSCC) in Bhopal.

The competition, held at the Madhya Pradesh State Shooting Academy, brought together India's elite shooters, including Olympians and World Cup champions, where Abishek's exceptional performance placed him at the forefront of Indian shooting.

Abishek won three gold medals in the Team Events, alongside a silver in the Junior Men's 10-metre Air Rifle Finals, with a stunning score of 251.4.

His silver came in a high-stakes final where Rudrankksh Patil, a contender for the Paris 2024 Olympics, broke the World Record to win the gold medal. Additionally, Abishek claimed a silver in the Junior Mixed Team Event with Tilottama Sen and a bronze in the Civilian Category.

Abishek Sekhar is the first shooter from Karnataka to win six medals at the 67th National Shooting Championship Competitions (NSCC) in Bhopal | EXPRESS

Starting his journey in 2019, Abishek quickly made a name for himself by winning gold in all categories of the 10-metre Open Sight Shooting event and breaking the Karnataka record within just two months of training. After a two-year break during the pandemic and to focus on academics, he returned to shooting in 2022 and has since accumulated numerous accolades, including at the State Shooting Championships and Dussehra Cup.

Trained by renowned coach Ramachandran Purushothaman at the Art of Shooting Academy in Bengaluru, Abishek continues to receive strong support from the Karnataka State Rifle Association.

"This year, I went into the nationals with great confidence. My ultimate dream is to stand on the podium at the next Olympics and make my country proud," Abishek said, reflecting on his future ambitions.

His coach, Ramachandran Purushothaman, highlighted, "Abishek's attention to detail, discipline, and ability to analyse each shot will carry him far in the sport."

The 67th NSCC attracted a record 13,522 shooters from across India, including Olympians and national-level competitors.

EDITORIAL

"Some see protecting the climate as a luxury, but that's an outdated worldview from a time when we thought industrialisation was the end goal, waste was growth, and wealth meant a thick haze of air pollution

M S Swaminathan

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Ramnath Goenka

SPENDING ON FOOD GOES UP, INFLATION REAL CHALLENGE

THE new household consumption survey data show spending on food items has gone up in 2023-24 vis-a-vis the previous year. The share of food in total spending in rural households increased to 47.04 percent in 2023-24 from 46.4 percent in 2022-23. In urban households, the average share of food items increased from 39.17 percent of the overall spending in 2022-23 to 39.68 percent in 2023-24. Even though the year-on-year increase is not very large and is still 500-600 basis points lower than the share of spending on food in 2011-12, the data indicate that high food inflation in the previous year did impact household consumption patterns. In fact, the 8-9 percent increase in household consumption in 2023-24 was largely due to inflation. If inflation is eliminated, consumption in the real term has increased by only 3.5 percent, which is much lower than the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 8.2 percent in FY24. The data show that real consumption growth is in a slow lane, and analysts have blamed high inflation, especially food inflation, for this trend. The government has tried addressing this issue by looking at the supply-side constraints, but they have yielded limited results. Typically, the measures adopted include stock limits, a ban on exports of certain food items and vegetables, and lowering import duties on items like edible oil. While these measures have been successful in taming food inflation to some extent, the overdependence on rain for agriculture is a significant hindrance in keeping inflation in check.

High food inflation continues to result in higher retail inflation, preventing the central bank from cutting rates, which, according to many, has resulted in anaemic growth in second-quarter GDP. There has been a growing call for keeping food inflation out of the equation while deciding the interest rates. However, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has not bitten the bullet on this yet and has been resisting the temptation to do so. But things may change next year. India is considering adopting a new base year by late 2025 or early 2026. The new base year would most likely be 2022-23, and this would result in lower weightage to food in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In a way, it could address the high inflation issue temporarily, but food inflation would remain a challenge.

LESSONS TO LEARN FROM TIGRESS PLAYING TRUANT

A three-year-old tigress is giving jitters to the forest departments of Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand. Translocated from Maharashtra's Tadoba-Andheri Tiger Reserve (TATR) to Similipal in Odisha, Zeenat is roaming the landscape and hot on her trail is a 150-strong team from the three states, constantly tracking the big cat's movement through her radio collar signals. Over the last three weeks, it has covered a few hundred kilometres, moving from Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) to Chakulia in Jharkhand, touching Mayurjharna in Purulia district of West Bengal. Zeenat is part of the country's first-ever programme for a tiger population's genetic rescue, which is being experimented on in Similipal. A rich habitat and part of the central India tiger landscape, it has about 27 felines including the rare melanistic tigers. The growing number of what is loosely called the 'black tigers' had prompted the National Tiger Conservation Authority to pitch for a tiger supplementation plan to improve genetic diversity, lest the population collapse. As part of the plan, STR was sanctioned two female tigers from TATR in the first phase. Jamuna arrived in October and has been circulating in the larger Similipal landscape. Zeenat landed the following month but moved out of the state's geographical territory after about two weeks, sending the Odisha government into a tizzy. That resulted in the mounting of a massive exercise to track her and tranquilise it. The two neighbouring states are helping out.

However, Zeenat's wild exploratory movements are natural for a young tigress to establish its territory. It presents challenges and offers learning as well. Odisha forest department, which simulated various scenarios as part of the exercise, responded swiftly by deploying field teams that coordinated well with their counterparts and devised precise surveillance. Simultaneous attempts to tranquilise the tigress are on. The task would also be to secure Zeenat from the local communities known to be hostile to wild animals in the past. Good working relationships with states for coordination and knowledge sharing are useful during such uncommon yet anticipated situations. As India mounts its tiger conservation strategies, it must also create a dedicated team of trackers, trained and equipped with the latest technology. Zeenat's wild exploits also provide a unique opportunity to document its story, which can become a case study for the future.

QUICK TAKE

OF CRACKING EGGS, CLUCKING CHICKENS

CHICKEN or egg first? The metaphor has been around since Aristotle wondered where an infinite sequence originated. Plutarch played safe—either could have come first, depending on one's perspective of creation. But evolutionary biology is making progress. In 2010, British scientists claimed the chicken came first because a protein found only in a chicken's ovaries could form the outer eggshell. Late this November, a Swiss biologist startled all, saying the egg came first. Her team studied a single-celled organism to prove processes necessary for creating eggs existed a billion years ago—long before chickens or even animals emerged. It sparked a fresh scramble which should hopefully resolve the feathery dilemma.

While air pollution is a problem year-round, it worsens during winter due to stagnant weather conditions that trap pollutants near the ground. We need to tackle its root cause

URBAN GREENERY ANSWER TO CURB AIR POLLUTION

VIBHA DHAWAN
Director General, TERI

MANDAR PARDIKAR

POOR air quality is a significant environmental risk we are grappling with today. In most Indian cities, the concentration of PM10 particles is much higher than the WHO's guidelines. It persists year-round and worsens during winter due to stagnant weather conditions that trap pollutants near the ground. Artificial rain through cloud seeding offers temporary relief but depends on moisture-laden clouds and has prohibitive costs, mixed outcomes, and uncertain success. Tackling air pollution's root causes is crucial.

Source apportionment studies carried out by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) across various cities highlighted that transport, industries, re-suspended dust and biomass burning in residential sectors are dominant contributors to air pollution.

Growing consumerism and rising vehicles on the road significantly contribute to PM2.5 pollution. The current Pollution Under Control system does not measure PM emissions from vehicles and can be easily manipulated. Delhi and NCR mandate a 10-year age limit for commercial vehicles, as older ones pollute significantly more than BSVI vehicles.

Traffic congestion is a ubiquitous issue, even in cities with well-developed infrastructure, exacerbating air quality problems. Although the transition to electric vehicles is underway, the pace is sluggish due to the lack of an enabling ecosystem. Moreover, public transport in most non-attainment cities operates at suboptimal levels, with service quality rated at three or four, instead of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's recommended level of two.

Despite the availability of metro systems in several cities, inadequate last-mile connectivity often makes them less accessible and costlier for daily commuters. Curbing transport emissions requires cleaner technologies, scrappage policy enforcement, intelligent traffic systems, and strengthened public transportation.

In the industrial sector, the use of biomass, coal, and unauthorised fuels by medium and small-scale enterprises poses a significant challenge. Even industries with operational consent often fail to report accurate emissions or use approved fuels. The efficacy of installed air pollution control devices remains questionable due to poor operational practices.

Municipal solid waste burning is yet another source of air pollution. Even if the collection efficiency of the waste management system in cities is over 90 percent, segregation at the source is negligible, resulting in landfills. The answer is also in looking at carbon markets to leverage additional funding for waste treatment infrastructure.

Re-suspended dust, primarily from unpaved and poorly maintained roads, construction sites and barren land is a big issue. While a band-aid solution like water sprinkling can provide immediate relief, paving roads, effectively maintaining infrastructure and enforcing construction guidelines are long-term solutions.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Unsustainable agriculture practices, including higher usage of fertilisers, also aggravate air pollution. Promoting biofertilisers reduces reliance on chemical fertilisers and minimises ammonia emissions, supporting sustainable agricultural practices and improving air quality. Biomass burning for cooking and heating in rural areas remains a persistent issue. Biogas plants offer a solution for rural waste management, providing cleaner fuel for kitchens and organic fertiliser to support sustainable agricultural practices in rural areas.

Since air pollution knows no boundaries, emissions from rural areas contribute to urban air quality deterioration. A typical example is the burning of parali (paddy stubble), quite common in the North from end-September through mid-November. Chronically, Delhi and the national capital region struggle to cope with poor air quality during this period every year. Furthermore, pollution from sources outside Indian cities often outweighs local emissions, highlighting the need to adopt a regional airshed strategy over a city-centric approach for effective management.

Air pollution also affects public health, raising the question of whether a portion of the health budget could be redirected toward improving air quality. Additionally, since sources of air pollution contribute to climate change, there is a need to integrate sector-specific policies that address both air quality improvement and carbon emission reduction.

Valuable lessons can be learned from China's approach to tackling air pollution. Once among the most polluted cities globally, Beijing has made remarkable progress in improving air quality. Beginning in the 1970s, the efforts to control Beijing's air pollution evolved through three phases. From 1970 to 1990, the focus was on mitigating emissions from coal-fired facilities. In the following decade, attention shifted to industrial and vehicular emissions. Since 2000, the city has addressed complex regional pollution.

Beijing's government has prioritised air pollution control since 1998, implementing a broad range of measures, including promoting clean energy, controlling vehicle emissions, upgrading industrial structures, enhancing air quality monitoring, and raising public awareness. The phased programme in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region targeted vehicle emission controls on new and in-use vehicles, fuel quality, clean energy adoption, traffic management, and incentives for retiring old vehicles, alongside investments in rail transit and non-motorised infrastructure.

China's Great Green Wall, also known as the Three-North Shelterbelt Programme, is a monumental afforestation initiative aimed at curbing desertification, reducing air pollution, and improving biodiversity. In the decades since its inception in 1978, the programme has focused on planting billions of trees across the northern arid regions of China to form a protective barrier against advancing deserts, particularly the Gobi Desert.

This project has reduced wind-blown dust storms and particulate matter emissions from barren lands and improved soil quality. The initiative has evolved into a sustainable model for large-scale environmental restoration by integrating advanced technology like satellite monitoring and community participation. Lessons from this project can inspire similar efforts in India to combat re-suspended dust emissions and enhance urban greenery as part of long-term air pollution control strategies.

(Views are personal)

LEAVING BAGGAGE BEHIND IN 2024

RENUKA NARAYANAN

FAITHLINE

HAPPY New Year, dear readers. May 2025 bring our land and all of us abundant good fortune––health, wealth and happiness by the bushel. A new year, even if by an international and not Indian reckoning of time, is always a great calendar opportunity to make a fresh start with renewed hope and energy. Or so it seems to me.

In this regard, there is an old Indian story I like about leaving unwanted and unnecessary baggage behind. Two ascetics, one old and one young, came to a river bank. They saw a young woman flailing in the water. The young ascetic cast aside his vows of strict celibacy and not looking at, let alone touching, a woman. A greater force called humanity gripped him. He dived in and saved the young woman from drowning. Since she was too weak to walk, he carried her in his arms to the village nearby and handed her over safely to those who could take care of her.

The two ascetics resumed their journey. They crossed the river by hitching a ride with an obliging boatman and walked miles into the countryside on the other bank. The older ascetic was visibly disturbed and kept shaking his head and muttering to himself all the way. Finally, as dusk fell and they halted under a tree for the night, he burst out at the young ascetic, "What you did was very wrong. How could you, an ascetic sworn, hold a woman like that?"

The young ascetic was astonished. "I only did my duty as one human being towards another in trouble. Does not scripture teach us that doing so is the human covenant? And once I handed her over, I forgot all about the incident and moved on. I left her behind. But you, sir, seem to be still carrying her in your head." The old ascetic was abashed at the plain truth of this and, being a just and reasonable person at heart, thanked the young ascetic for pointing out the nature of true detachment, the ascetic's avowed goal.

Doesn't this story, taken from the legitimate lore of the land, tell us something? That as we enter a new year, we too should try to leave old grouses and grudges behind and go forward with light hearts and baggage-free minds? It is not easy to do as genuine grievances do need to be addressed. But surely, we need not sweat the small stuff while taking steady steps towards addressing those genuine grievances?

Another story comes to mind, this time from the Ramayana. The Vanara Sena discovers, thanks to Jatayu's elder brother, the old eagle Sampati, that Sita is imprisoned in Lanka across the sea.

Sampati's backstory is a noble one. During their youth, Sampati and Jatayu, in order to test their powers, flew towards the Sun. They soared higher and higher

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

> Sampati shielded his younger brother Jatayu as they flew close to the sun, ending up with his wings burnt. But when he helped Rama's cause by using his long-distance vision to pin-point Sita's location, his wings grew back and he became normal. Is it not better for us to believe the best in our future, hoping good things shall happen?

into the endless vault of the sky. Jatayu, with the bravado and recklessness of youth, outflew his brother and entered the Suryamandala, the orbit of the Sun, during high noon. Due to the Sun's blazing heat, his wings began to get scorched. Seeing Jatayu's plight, Sampati flew above him and spread his own wings wide to shield his brother. As a result, it was Sampati's wings that got burnt. He fell towards the Vindhya mountains and spent his life thus disabled.

But due to his merit, he found a protector in the sage Nishakara, who was performing tapasya in the lap of the Vindhyas. The sage looked after Sampati as his own child.

Sampati is said to have been enlightened with spiritual knowledge in the Vindhyas by this sage and others, who gently taught him to stop lamenting about his broken body and patiently wait until he could fulfil a great role in history, which was to help Rama and the cause of justice. When Sampati's moment came, he did not fail his destiny. He told the Vanara Sena where to find Sita because he could see her with his piercing, long-distance vision. As he spoke, his body began sprouting new feathers, and by the time he finished speaking, his wings had grown back, as foretold by Sage Nishakara.

My big takeaway from this seemingly small story tucked into the grand epic is this: who knows what life has in store for us in the new year or in the years ahead? Is it not an emotionally healthier choice to believe in the best and live our days as cheerfully and decently as we can, secure in the hope that good things can and shall happen?

The only thing in our control is the nature of our response to calamities and situations. It seems to me that we can either make the best or worst of it. In that case, why not choose to walk the path of light and live as though only good has befallen us? It might even be true deep down, although it may not seem so on top sometimes. But perhaps we need to find and activate our inner strength to accomplish our potential.

The story of Hanuman in this very episode from the Ramayana points the way. Hanuman has forgotten his own incredible mental and physical powers because of a restraining order passed on him as a child for his overactive strength. While other vanaras say they can jump only this far across the sea, Jambavan reminds Hanuman of his hidden and unutilised strength. A startled Hanuman remembers his capabilities and proceeds to jump the hundred yojanas across the sea to Lanka. So, let us celebrate endings, for they precede new beginnings.

(Views are personal)
(shebaba09@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Deserting India

Ref: *Why are rich Indians deserting India* (Dec 29). One group of rich Indians believes in the country and its growth. Another group deserts India to settle in foreign destinations for better lifestyle, safer environment, access to health and educational services, and to escape from complex tax systems. It is unfortunate.
P Victor Selvaraj, Palayamkottai

Improve liveability

The migration of affluent classes from India is slowly gaining momentum. Tough regulatory structure, poor civic infrastructure, penchant to lead quality lives without public glare and desire to live in less polluted areas have contributed to the growing appetite for migration. India needs to become more liveable to attract this genre.
Rajarao Kumar, Bengaluru

Shady income

Only those Indian rich whose asset accumulation was by clandestine means choose to settle elsewhere for fear of facing the wrath of irritated victims, but not out of fear of facing the government. Just as a dip in a holy river redeems one of all sins, joining a party insulates the sinner of all hostile legal action.
A G Rajmohan, Anantapur

Great economist

Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's legacy will be remembered forever in India. He ushered in a new era of liberalisation and redefined democracy in his own way. In his demise, the country has lost a great economist, reformer and statesman. History will always be kinder to him.
Satish Reddy Kanaganti, Tipparthy

Memorial politics

Ref: *Cremation over, political row over memorial isn't* (Dec 29). Even before the embers of the funeral pyre of Dr Manmohan Singh could die down, the Congress is already starting a political slugfest. The Congress is needlessly raking up the memorial issue as BJP has confirmed that a fitting memorial would be built for him. It is better for the GOP to recall the shabby way ex-PM P V Narasimha Rao had been treated when his body was not allowed to be placed in the AICC office.
K V Raghuram, Wayanad

Hypocritical behaviour

The way the Congress is making a hue and cry over Manmohan Singh's memorial is most absurd. People have not forgotten how the Congress behaved on the demise of its own veteran and senior leader P V Narasimha Rao. The Congress should stop such petty politics.
Raghu Joshi, Davangere

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
Chairman of the Board: **Manoj Kumar Sonthalia** Editor: **Santwana Bhattacharya**
Published by **R K Jhunjhunwala** on behalf of Express Publications (Madurai) Private Limited, at No. 1, Queen's Road, Bengaluru - 560 001 and printed by him at Express Press, Plot No. 2A, Bommasandra Industrial Area, 4th Phase, Survey No. 46, Part Yarandahalli Village, Jigani Hobli, Anekal Taluk. Bengaluru - 560 099. **Bengaluru.** Vol. 60, No. 311 RNI Reg. No. 3457/1960. Phone: 080-22866893. **Copyright:** Express Publications (Madurai) Private Limited. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner, electronic or otherwise, in whole or in part, without prior written permission is prohibited.

POSTS OF THE DAY

Amit Shah @AmitShah
The PM said... that a new revolution is taking birth from this Olympics being organised for the first time in Bastar region, which was once a stronghold of Maoist violence.

Randeep Surjewala @rssurjewala
The decision of the BJP government to cancel 9 districts in Rajasthan is unjust and anti-people. This decision is unfortunate and highly condemnable.

Piyush Goyal @PiyushGoyal
If people had got jobs in UP, the unemployed would not have been forced to leave the state ... UP is top among all the states in terms of 'job migration'.

Constitution stood test of time: PM

During Mann ki Baat, Modi announces launch of special website 'constitution75.com'

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

FILE PHOTO

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed the Constitution of India, describing it as a "guiding light" that has "stood the test of time in every sense of the term."

He made these remarks during his monthly radio broadcast programme, "Maan Ki Baat," which focused on the Constitution as the nation prepares to celebrate its 75th year on January 26, recognised as Republic Day.

"On the Janaury 26, 2025, our Constitution is completing 75 years. It is a matter of great honour for all of us. The Constitution, handed over to us by our Constitution-makers, has stood the test of time in every sense of the term," The Prime Minister remarked.

Terming the Constitution the "guiding light" to the country, he said, "The Constitution is our guiding light, our guide. It is on account of the Constitution that I am here today, being able to talk to you".

Modi informed the audience about a special website named 'constitution75.com' created to connect the people with the legacy of Constitution on its 75 years of existence.

He also encouraged the people that the website created on the Constitution of India will help them to read the Preamble of Constitution in myriad languages.

The Prime Minister also dwelt upon the grandeur of Maha Kumbh, which is getting underway from January 13 for next 45 days in Prayagraj. Urging people to "annihilate the feeling of division and hatred in society", he said, "The specialty of Maha Kumbh is not only in its vastness. It also lies in its diversity. Crores of people congregate for this event".

He said the Maha Kumbh should send out a message that the entire country must be united.

For the first time an AI chatbot will assist attendees, providing navigation to ghats, temples, and akharas in 11 Indian languages. He said that the entire areas of Kumbh have been covered with AI-powered cameras. It will help locate their missing kin.

Citing a WHO report, Modi highlighted the 80% reduction in malaria cases and deaths in India from 2015 to 2023. He praised efforts in Assam's Jorhat, where community-driven initiatives have significantly curbed malaria.

Referring to a Lancet study, the PM said the Aayushman Bharat Yojana has enabled 90% of cancer patients to receive timely treatment. "Because of this scheme, poor patients who earlier avoided testing and treatment due to costs are now receiving support", he said.

The PM also highlighted progress of India's creative industries like films and others.

Speaking about WAVES, he said, "India will host the World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES), a significant step in making the country a global hub for content creation", he said, adding India's the creator economy is bringing new energy to achieve $5 trillion economy.

The PM also spoke about the 'Bastar Olympics, held for showcasing India's traditions and culture.

Maha Kumbh of unity

Reflecting on how the Kumbh reflects unity in diversity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said there is no place for any form of discrimination during the festival. "No one is big or small. Such a scene of unity in diversity will not be seen anywhere else in the world. Therefore, the Kumbh is also the Mahakumbh of unity," Modi commented. The Prime Minister also dwelt upon the grandeur of the festival, which is getting underway from January 13 for next 45 days at Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh.

Dr Singh's ashes immersed in Yamuna; row intensifies

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

Former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh's ashes being immersed at the Asth Ghat, Majnu Ka Tilla in New Delhi on Sunday | PTI

THE ashes of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh were immersed in the Yamuna river near the Majnu ka Tila Gurdwara on Sunday by his family members as per the Sikh rituals.

Sources here said that Singh's family members collected the ashes from the Nigambodh Ghat in the morning. "After collecting it from the site of cremation, the ashes were carried to the 'Asht Ghat' on the Yamuna river bank near the gurdwara and immersed into the river. The ritual was attended by Singh's wife, Gursharan Kaur, and his three daughters, Upinder Singh, Daman Singh and Amrit Singh, along with other close relatives," a source said. He said that none of the senior Congress leaders or the Gandhi family could be seen accompanying the family at the immersion site.

On January 3, an 'Akhand Path' would be held at the late PM's official residence 3, Motilal Nehru Marg, while some prayers were also held on Sunday at the Gurudwara.

Sources close to the Singh family said that a traditional "blog ceremony, 'Antim Ardas' and 'kirtan', have also been planned on the same day at the Rakab Ganj Gurdwara, located near the Parliament complex.

Paying its tribute to the late leader, the Congress, in an X post, said, "We all will always remember Manmohan Singh Ji's service to the nation, his dedication and simplicity".

Meanwhile, senior BJP leader and head of the party's IT cell Amit Malviya slammed the Congress and its leaders for not accompanying Singh's family to the cremation ground to collect ashes. "Very sad to see that not a single member of Congress or the Gandhi family showed up to collect the remains of Dr Manmohan Singh Ji. For Media attention and to politicise, Congress was present, but they were absent when it came to honouring him with dignity. Truly shameful," Malviya shared on 'X'.

Another BJP senior leader, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, too flayed the Congress leaders for their absence during the rituals.

Ending China standoff high point in '24 foreign policy, Bangla poses a challenge

> The Indian aggression was initiated through the principles of the 1972 Constitution (and) the proclamation will make it clear how the Mujibist Constitution destroyed the aspirations of the people and exactly how we want to replace it
>
> Hasnat Abdullah, Bangladesh's Anti-Discrimination Students Movement convener

On war

In his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told him that a solution to the Ukraine conflict is not possible on the battlefield.

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

IN a year marked by geopolitical tensions, India and China ended an over four-and-a-half-year border standoff and announced steps to reduce mistrust even as New Delhi faced fresh challenges after deposed Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina fled the country in the face of a mass movement against her rule.

The year 2024 saw India navigating the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas conflict.

New Delhi is readying its approach in dealing with US President-elect Donald Trump's second term amid fears that his policy approach relating to trade and tariff may have profound implications for international trade.

Though the overall India-US relations broadly continued to blossom, Washington has been pressing India to take action against Indians allegedly involved in a foiled plot to assassinate pro-Khalistan separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun in New York last year.

The relations between India and Canada sharply nosedived in the second half of the year after Ottawa linked several Indian diplomats including High Commissioner Sanjay Verma to the murder of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

However, the end of the military faceoff between India and China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh was the high point in the foreign policy domain. Following an understanding reached on October 21, the two sides completed the disengagement of troops at the two remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks on the margins of the BRICS Summit in Russia on October 23 and agreed to revive bilateral dialogue mechanisms.

However, India's relations with Bangladesh came under strain after Hasina fled the country. The relations nosedived dramatically after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus failed to contain attacks on minorities, especially Hindus, in that country.

This month, the Yunus-government sent a diplomatic note to New Delhi seeking extradition of Hasina, a move that may further strain the relation between the two neighbouring countries.

In his meeting with President Vladimir Putin, Modi told him that a solution to the Ukraine conflict is not possible on the battlefield.

Modi's visit to Russia triggered some criticism in the West as the trip came amid global outrage over a Russian missile strike on a children's hospital in Kyiv. In August, Modi travelled to Ukranian capital Kyiv and conveyed to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that Ukraine and Russia should sit together to end the war and that India was ready to play an active role to restore peace in the region.

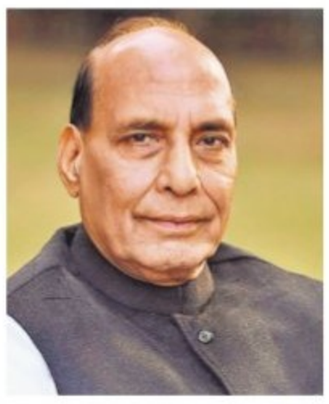
Defence focus in '25: Integrated theatre commands, big-ticket procurements

> Acquisition procedures are being reviewed and renewed to boost 'Aatmanirbharta'. Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 is likely to undergo a complete revamp in 2025
>
> Ministry of Defence

Acquisition plan

Defence Procurement Board has approved the annual acquisition plan 2024-26 under which 25 schemes costing approximately ₹40,695 crore have been identified and targeted to be concluded in FY 2024-25.

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi



THE country's defence is at the cusp of a major overhaul, with preparations going on to not only make major organisational changes but also tweak policy for procurement to scale up capabilities.

The proposal to materialise the Integrated Theatre Commands (ITC) being made under the Chief of Defence Staff in concurrence with the Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Navy and Air Force has reached an advanced stage and is expected, after the vetting by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, to be ratified by the Cabinet Committee on Security.

The proposal has 198 initiatives to achieve restructuring, which will be a long-drawn process. The defence of the country will be looked after by three ITCs with the concept of 'One Border One Force'.

The warfighting structure is being reorganised into theatre commands so as to have assets of all three forces under one commander, who will be responsible for all operations under his theatre.

The Maritime Theatre Command, based out of Karwar in Karnataka, would be entrusted with coastal and maritime operations.

The Western Integrated Theatre Command will be responsible for defence and security bordering Pakistan. The Northern Integrated Theatre Command will have the entire northern border with China under its area of responsibility with headquarters in Lucknow.

The government has been the proponent of bringing a change where the defence will be looked after by forces armed with indigenous arms and equipment.

Cognisance is being taken of the hi-tech warfighting equipment being developed and used across the world especially in active war zones.

The Ministry of Defence in its 2024 year-end review said, "Acquisition procedures are being reviewed and renewed to boost 'Aatmanirbharta'. Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 is likely to undergo a complete revamp in 2025 and efforts are being made to make it amenable to service requirements."

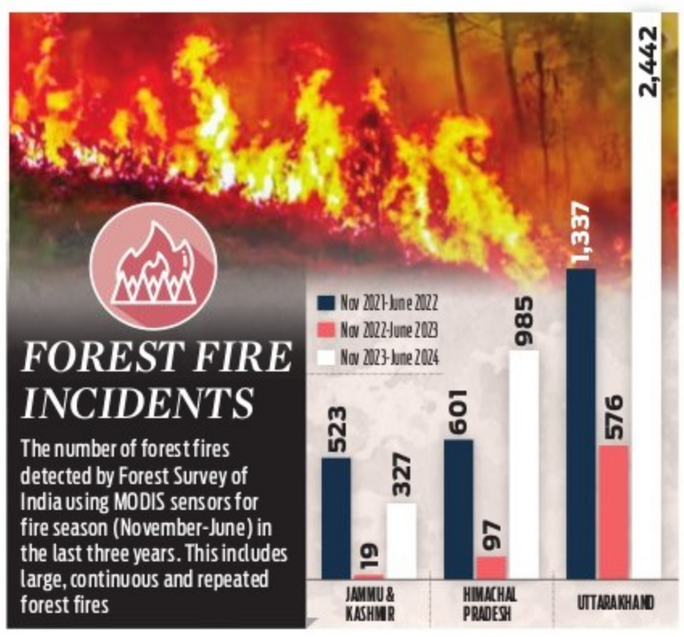
More than 500 schemes have been planned for acquiring potent fighting capability in the next 15 years. The broad categories of acquisition schemes include force application, battlefield awareness, command and control, sustenance and support, and protection.

Defence Procurement Board has approved the annual acquisition plan 2024-26 under which 25 schemes costing approximately ₹40,695 crore have been identified and targeted to be concluded in the financial year 2024-25.

High-profile defence projects expected to be ratified include the construction of the six state-of-the-art conventional submarines with integrated air independent propulsion and procurement of 114 multi-role fighter aircraft.

West Himalayas record sharp rise in wildfires in a yr

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi



FOREST fires in Western Himalaya region increased manifold during the wildfire season (November to June) this year, compared to a year ago. Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir registered a sharp rise in forest fire incidents, causing extensive damage to forest coverage.

According to the 18th biennial assessment of India's forests — India State of Forest Report 2023 (ISFR 2023) — released recently by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), there is a phenomenal rise in forest fire incidents in the western Himalayan states during the forest fire season between November 2023 and June 2024.

For instance, in Jammu and Kashmir, there has been 18 times increase in forest fire incidents compared to the previous year. As per ISFR data, there were 327 fire incidents recorded in the state this season, while only 19 incidents were reported in last year.

Similarly, in Himachal Pradesh, there has been 10 times rise in forest fire incidents. The FSI recorded 985 forest fires this year, against 97 incidents last year. Likewise in Uttarakhand, 2,442 forest fires were reported this year, against 576 last year.

Experts cite the emergence of the El Nino phenomenon this year, which caused a record rise in temperature during the deficit summer monsoon, as one of the reasons behind the rise in fires. Also, the winter in 2023-24 was dry, which increased forest fuel loads and created a conducive condition for forest fires.

"Last year, lesser forest fires had increased fuel loads in the forest. This contributed to a large number of forest fires in western Himalayas this year," said Nishant Mandhotra, Himachal Pradesh nodal officer for controlling forest fires.

According to the ISFR, fires are causing problems in the western Himalayan region due to fires in pine forests and transhumance pastoralists, who move livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle. "Chir pine trees do not allow the grass to grow, which is important for pastoralists. So they cause a fire, to increase grasslands for their sheep and goats," said Mandhotra.

This year, a total of 34,562 sq km of forest area was burnt across the country. The maximum fire-affected forest areas have been observed in Andhra Pradesh (5,286.76 km²), followed by Maharashtra (4,095.04 km²) and Telangana (3,983.28 km²).

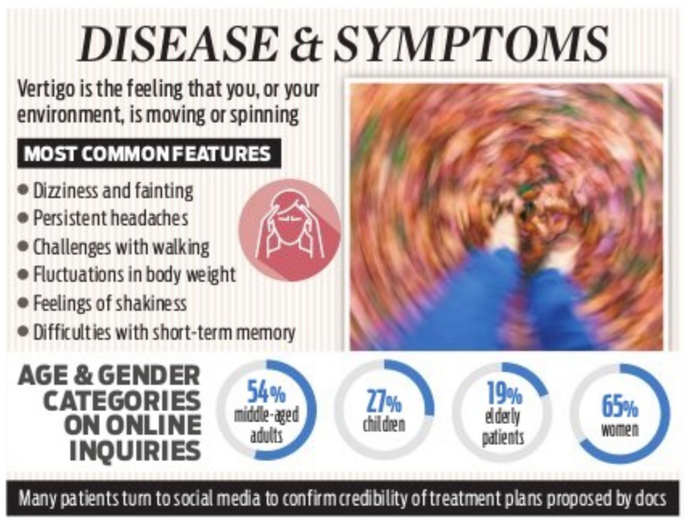
The highest percentage of recorded forest areas affected by forest fire has been observed in Telangana (14.82%), followed by Andhra Pradesh (13.94%) and Bihar (10.71%).

However, this year's overall forest fire incidents were comparatively lower than in the last two years, except in the western Himalayan regions.

The FSI also detected large forest fire incidents that lasted from at least 24 hours to more than 15 days. In 2023-24, the majority of large forest fire events were detected in Uttarakhand (1,313), followed by Odisha (1,131), Andhra Pradesh (1,073), Madhya Pradesh (962), Chhattisgarh (928) and Telangana (833). The majority of them lasted up to a week.

More patients with vertigo turning to social media for advice, says study

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi


DISEASE & SYMPTOMS
Vertigo is the feeling that you, or your environment, is moving or spinning
MOST COMMON FEATURES
Dizziness and fainting
Persistent headaches
Challenges with walking
Fluctuations in body weight
Feelings of shakiness
Difficulties with short-term memory
AGE & GENDER CATEGORIES ON ONLINE INQUIRIES
54% middle-aged adults
27% children
19% elderly patients
65% women
Many patients turn to social media to confirm credibility of treatment plans proposed by docs

PEOPLE suffering from vertigo in India are increasingly turning to social media to seek information and even treatment and support, a latest study has found. Vertigo is the feeling that you, or your environment, is moving or spinning.

The study also found that most vertigo patients (51 per cent) turned to micro-blogging site X (formerly Twitter) as a platform to seek advice regarding treatment options. In contrast, a smaller group, comprising 46 per cent, sought information through medical forums, said the study published in International Journal of Clinical Skills. YouTube was another favoured platform.

Most inquiries came from middle-aged adults, accounting for 54 per cent of the total submissions. Children followed, representing 27 per cent of the questions posed. Meanwhile, elderly patients contributed 19 per cent of the queries. Notably, 65 per cent, of these inquiries came from women.

Dr Sudhir Kumar, professor and head of neurology department, Apollo Hospital, Hyderabad, and the lead author of the study, said it is absolutely fine if patients browse through social media to gain knowledge about their illness.

"The digital era has completely transformed the practice of medicine. Patients are increasingly using online platforms to discuss their medical conditions. Patients have many doubts and queries, and sometimes they are not able to get appointments on time or are not able to get answers from doctors. So they turn to social media for answers," said Dr Kumar, known by his X handle Hyderabaddoctor.

The study also found that many patients turned to social media to confirm the credibility of the treatment plans proposed by specialists. Many took the opportunity to inquire about the specific symptoms they were experiencing and sought clarity on their diagnoses.

BPSC PROTESTS

Police resorted to lathi charge and used water cannons to disperse the large number of Bihar Public Service Commission candidates as they marched towards the Chief Minister's residence demanding cancellation of the preliminary test.

2 SUFFOCATE OF FIREPLACE FUMES IN THEIR SLEEP IN RAJ

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	28	15	Mumbai	33	18
Bhopal	22	13	Panaji	31	23
Jaipur	20	07	Patna	25	13
Amritsar	16	08	Lucknow	23	11
Chennai	30	23	Port Blair	30	25
Kolkata	26	16	Imphal	25	07
Srinagar	06	-03	Chandigarh	19	09

● Heavy snowfall leads to closure of Badrinath highway, authorities alert ● Snow-covered landscapes likely to attract foreign tourists

100 villages isolated, schools shut

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

A snow-covered residential area after fresh snowfall in several districts | EXPRESS

ROAD access to nearly 100 villages has been cut off, significantly disrupting daily life and leaving residents confined in their homes. This situation has arisen after a continuous mix of rain and snowfall blanketed the region from the mountains to the plains of Uttarakhand over the past two days.

Sources from the state disaster management authority report that "lower-lying areas of the state are also experiencing continuous light to moderate rainfall, leading to a substantial drop in temperatures."

In response to these harsh conditions, the district administration in the mountainous regions, including the state capital, has announced school closures until January 4.

The heavy snowfall has also led to the closure of crucial routes, including the Badrinath highway and the road connecting Kumaon to the China border. According to the Meteorological Department, "There may be some relief on Monday, with forecasts indicating sunshine in most of the areas." However, they also cautioned that "partly cloudy conditions may persist in certain mountainous regions."

As residents brace for the ongoing chill, authorities are working to assess and manage the impact of the harsh weather on transportation and daily life. The hilly state has been experiencing a significant change in weather since Friday morning, following the activation of a fresh western disturbance.

According to local meteorological reports, "Most of the areas have been under a thick blanket of clouds throughout the day, with some regions witnessing rainfall, while others experiencing snowfall."

Heavy snowfall has been reported in several high-altitude locations, including Chamoli, Badrinath Dham, Hemkund Sahib, Auli, and Gorson. The recent weather conditions have prompted authorities to remain vigilant as they monitor the situation closely.

Chamoli District Disaster Management Officer, Nandkishore Joshi stated, "Due to the snowfall, around 100 villages from Chamoli to Pithoragarh have been completely covered in snow, leading to the closure of access roads. The Badrinath Highway near Hanuman Chatti, the Joshimath-Malari Highway near Bhapakund, and the Ukhimath-Chopta Highway are all currently closed."

According to disaster management sources, over 150 workers and staff engaged in the ongoing master plan projects at the Badrinath Dham are currently trapped in their accommodations due to heavy snowfall. Additionally, reconstruction efforts at the Kedarnath Dham have also been affected by the adverse weather conditions.

In Pithoragarh district, snowfall has been reported on the high Himalayan peaks of Munsiyari and Dharchula. Meanwhile, lower regions of Kumaon have experienced several rounds of rainfall. In the vibrant village of Gunji, snow accumulation has reached between four to five feet.

According to Bikram Singh, Director of the Meteorological Center, "Most areas of the state are likely to remain dry on Monday. However, there may be partial cloud cover in Bageshwar, Chamoli, and Pithoragarh, along with light rain and snowfall in some places."

According to administrative sources, the continuous rainfall and hailstorms, along with snowfall, have severely affected the normal life in the lake city of Nainital. "Boating activities in the lake came to a complete halt during the rains," the officials reported. The town has been experiencing intermittent rainfall for the past 18 hours.

Digvijay Singh Bisht, president of the Nainital Hotel Association, said, "For the first time since the pandemic in 2020, we are witnessing an unprecedented rush of tourists in the picturesque town of Nainital. Not only is December 31 fully booked, but the upcoming weekend is also reserved."

Kashmir heading for 2 more snow spells in first week of Jan: MeT office

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

AFTER the season's first major snowfall, Kashmir is expected to experience two more snow spells in the first week of January. The snowfall is likely to boost the tourism sector and attract more visitors, including international tourists, to the snow-covered landscape, according to a meteorological department.

The official said a feeble Western Disturbance would hit Kashmir on January 1-2. "It may cause light snow at scattered places. Another moderate WD would hit the Valley on January 3-6. It will cause light to moderate snowfall at many places and moderate to heavy snowfall at isolated upper reaches of Kashmir," he added.

After a long dry spell, Srinagar and other parts of the Valley experienced season's first and major snowfall on Friday. The heavy snowfall disrupted the normal life and disconnected Kashmir's air and surface link for two days. Both the air and surface link were restored and train service resumed.

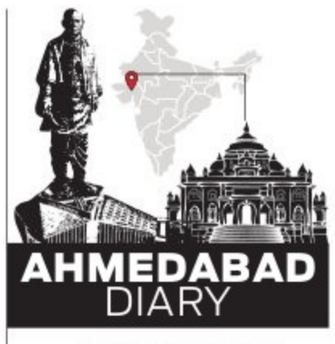
The tour operators say that after the snowfall and prediction of more, queries from tourists intending to visit the place have increased. Sajjad Ahmed Kralayari, Secretary General Travel Agents Association of Kashmir said they are receiving a good number of queries from the interested people.

"Till last week, tourists used to return disappointed as there was no snow. Now after the season's first snowfall, people want to visit Kashmir and enjoy the snowfall live," he said.

Kralayari said the humanity and hospitality displayed by Kashmiris during the snowfall by opening their doors and mosques for stranded tourists has sent a positive message outside. "It has promoted Kashmir in a big way and we are hopeful of increased tourist flow in the coming days," he said.

All the tourist destinations in the Valley, including the ski resort of Gulmarg, Pahalgam in south Kashmir and Sonamarg in central Kashmir are covered with a thick blanket of snow and giving a feel of "winter wonderland".

Tour operator Zahoor Ahmed Qari said the snowfall will boost Kashmir tourism with greater tourist footfall.



DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA
Our correspondent in Gujarat
dilipsingh@newindianexpress.com

BJP to prioritise 'active' members, not age

A key meeting took place on Saturday at the state BJP HQ "Kamalam", on the restructuring of state organisation. During the session, deadlocks surrounding several contentious issues were resolved, and crucial decisions were taken. Notably, the debate over the 45-year age limit for BJP's mandal presidents took centrestage. Sources within the party revealed that state organisation general secretary **Ratnakar** addressed the issue, emphasising that while the 45-year cap was important, it should not dominate the conversation. He urged a practical approach, stressing that focus should be on active members.

'One Position, One Person' rule flouted

BJP MLA Govind Parmar from Umreth submitted a formal complaint to state general secretary objecting to Hardik Prakash Patel's appointment as the Umreth city BJP president. The rift between Parmar and MP Mitesh Patel came to light, as Hardik's father, Prakash Patel, is a close associate of the MP and holds key positions in local organisations. According to sources, "The BJP had announced a "one person, one position" rule for appointments, stating that family members holding multiple roles would be disqualified. However, this rule doesn't seem to have been applied in Hardik's case.

Cong to hold national meet in Porbandar

After the Lok Sabha polls, Rahul Gandhi challenged the BJP, vowing to defeat them in their stronghold, Gujarat. Following this, at a recent Congress Working Committee meeting in Karnataka, it was announced that the party's next national session will be held in Gujarat, with speculations that it could take place in Gandhi's birthplace, Porbandar. Scheduled for April, the session will see Congress leaders from across the country converge in Gujarat, including national and regional figures, as well as district presidents. This event comes at a pivotal time, as Congress gears up for the upcoming local self-government elections.

Boy rescued from borewell in MP dist, dies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhopal

A ten-year-old boy Sumit Meena, who fell into an open borewell in Madhya Pradesh's Guna district, while flying kite on Saturday afternoon, was rescued after a 16-hour-long operation on Sunday morning.

Being stuck in water and mud at around 39 ft depth amid chilly weather worsened his condition. Despite efforts by doctors at the government hospital, he couldn't be saved.

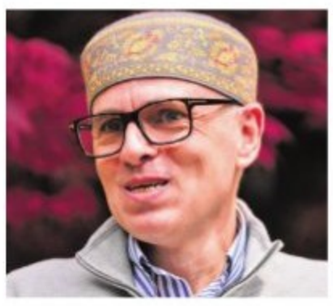
According to a senior doctor at the Guna district hospital, being stuck for around 16 hours in water and mud in the chilly weather caused hypothermia, despite all attempts by doctors' post rescue on Sunday morning, Sumit couldn't be saved.

While expressing grief at the minor's death after falling in the bore-well on private land in Pipliya village of Guna district, the Chief Minister Mohan Yadav appealed to citizens to properly cover the borewells on their private land to prevent the recurrence of such unfortunate incidents.

Sumit's death was reportedly the seventh such casualty in MP, after falling in open borewells in the last two years.

Navyug tunnel is a gift from Dr Singh, should be named after him: Omar

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar



'Rehabilitated pandits, provided reservation'

The chief minister also said that it was during Manmohan Singh's regime that the Round Table Conference on J&K was held, interlocutors were appointed, steps taken for rehabilitation of migrant Kashmiri Pandits including reservation of jobs for the community.

JAMMU and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday said the Navyug tunnel, which connects Qazigund with Banihal on Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, should be named after late Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

Talking to the media, Abdullah said the late prime minister's contribution towards J&K cannot be ignored. "It now takes people four to five hours to travel from Srinagar to Jammu via Srinagar-Jammu national highway during normal days. It is a gift from late PM Dr Manmohan Singh," he said.

Omar said the four-laning of Srinagar-Jammu National Highway was taken up during Dr Singh's rule. "He had given approval for the project".

He said there are two key tunnels on the highway. "One of the tunnels has been named after Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. The new Navyug tunnel connecting Qazigund with Banihal should be named after late PM Dr Manmohan Singh. It is his contribution and I want it to be named after Dr Singh".

Terming ex PM Manmohan Singh as a true statesman, Omar said his contribution towards J&K will be remembered forever. "He introduced the PM scholarship scheme for J&K students. Besides, it was during his regime that cross-LoC trade was started between two parts of Kashmir."

Rash driving claims 983 lives this year in U'khand: Data

NARENDRA SETHI @ Dehradun

UTTARAKHAND has recorded 983 fatalities attributed to rash driving and speeding in 2024. Official reports indicate that the majority of accidents in the state have been linked to reckless behaviour, with a notable increase observed not only in the plains but also in the mountainous regions.

In the Himalayan state, which spans an area of nearly 55,000 square kilometres and is covered by 70% forests, 983 people have lost their lives in 1,594 road accidents this year, according to data from the traffic directorate.

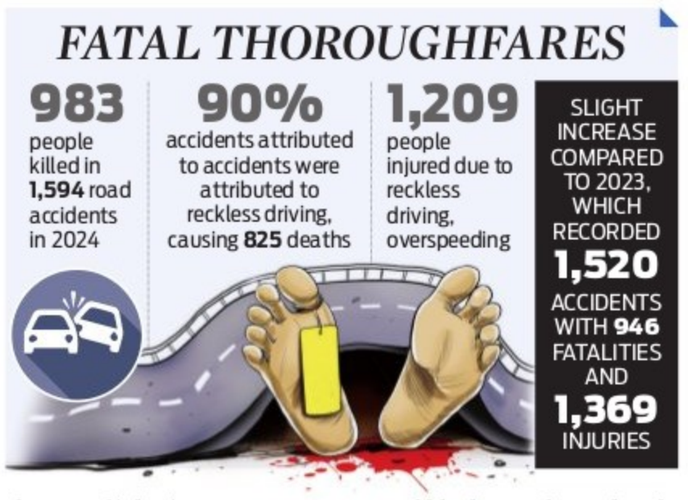
"Government statistics reveals that a shocking 1,353 of these accidents were attributed to reckless driving, resulting in the deaths of 825 people," a traffic police department official said. "The data highlights a critical issue. Rash driving and overspeeding continue to be major contributors to road fatalities in our state," the official said. The department also reported that 1,209 people sustained injuries due to reckless driving and overspeeding.

While this year's figures show a slight increase compared to 2023, which recorded 1,520 accidents with 946 fatalities and 1,369 injuries, there has been a noticeable decline in number of injuries this year.

Speaking to this newspaper, inspector general of police (traffic) Arun Mohan Joshi addressed the alarming rise in traffic accidents in the state. "We are conducting a deep study of all major accidents that have occurred in the state in the past," Joshi said, emphasising that accident-prone areas and black spots have already been identified.

In a proactive approach, he added, "We have communicated with the superintendents of police of all 13 districts to ensure that they collaborate with the authorities concerned to implement corrections and improvements at these hotspots."

Joshi also highlighted ongoing efforts to tighten road traffic regulations. "We are examining major accidents to implement stricter regulations," said IG Joshi.



Cleanest city Indore sees dip in migratory birds

ANURAAG SINGH @ Bhopal

Birders recording bird species around Indore during Bird Watch 2024 | EXPRESS

ARRIVAL of migratory birds, particularly ducks and waders, is declining significantly in India's cleanest city, Indore.

Comparison of data gathered from bird watching excursions and studies conducted by birders and ornithologists in December 2023 and December 2024 in Indore has revealed decline in overall count of bird species, including those birds migrating from Eurasian region (including Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia).

While the overall species sighting, which was 172 during the maiden bird watch in Indore in December 2023, declined to 165 during the same exercise in December 2024, the aggregate migratory duck counts dipped by over 20%.

Not just migratory ducks, but even the waders' count declined in the same proportion as the ducks, with their count at birding hotspots like the Sirpur Wetland, falling to single digits compared to the double digit figures of 2023.

According to Ajay Gadikar, an Indore-based ornithologist and coordinator of Indore Bird Watch 2023 and Indore Bird Watch 2024, migratory ducks have shown a trend of significant decline.

"This year migratory ducks like the Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveller, Ruddy Shelduck, Common Pochard, Ferruginous Duck showed a sharp decline in numbers than the last year. Also, waders such as Common sandpiper, wood sandpiper and marsh sandpiper counts were in single digits compared to what used to be in hundreds at many of the wetlands," Gadikar told this newspaper on Sunday.

Bird experts who formed part of the five-hour long event in Indore recently, cited several reasons, including acute climate changes, the impact of the long-drawn Russia-Ukraine war (most birds whose numbers have shown decline fly from the Eurasian region) and growing human activity in the forest areas, grasslands and wetlands of Indore which since long have served as the temporary habitat for migratory birds during winters.

Around 64 participants (bird watchers) explored the various sites in and around the city for five hours, in teams of three to five birders, which included some of the city's most experienced birders.

At least 13 habitats, which report maximum migratory birds' presence in Indore during the winters, including wetland, forest areas and grasslands were covered by the recent Bird Watch. While a total 165 bird species were observed at the 13 sites, the Chouhan Khedi talab on Kanadia Road reported the highest 66 species.

Documenting species

The 13 sites around the city of Indore were covered during the event, including Sirpur Wetland, Kajligarh Fort, Burana Khedi, Baroda Daulat Machal/Kishanpura Lake, Chouhan Khedi, Ralamandal, Residency, Mhow, Bilawali Talab, Talawali Chanda, Yeshwant Sagar and the Umrikheda Forest. Rare birds species which were documented during the exercise, include Ferruginous Duck, Verditer Flycatcher, Sarus Crane, Bonelli's Eagle, Olive backed Pipit and the Indian nuthatch.

Former sarpanch launches campaign to make gram panchayats AI-friendly

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

FOLLOWING Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision on promoting the use of artificial intelligence (AI), a former sarpanch of Bibipur village in Haryana's Jind district has launched a campaign to leverage this technology to improve governance, transparency and accountability in rural areas.

The campaign, called 'AI-friendly panchayat', seeks to create awareness about the benefits of AI-powered panchayats and encourage village councils to adopt the technology for better governance. "Every gram panchayat has to make a development plan (DP) to get its funds from the government. It has to send this proposal and upload it online to get the fund. Due to workload at times proposals lack details, hence panchayats do not get the proper funds they need. By using AI this issue can be solved," said Jaglan who transformed his village Bibipur into a model one with innovative initiatives.

"Also under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) gram panchayats can get funds but many a time they do not get it as they have to send proposals online. Many panchayats are unable to send proposals online, so fail to get funds under CSR initiatives of companies," he said.

The former sarpanch said AI-powered panchayats can bring about a revolutionary change in rural governance. "AI-powered panchayats will improve the quality of life for rural people and make village councils more accountable and transparent," Jaglan added.

As part of the campaign, Jaglan will be conducting workshops and training sessions for panchayat members and officials to educate them about the benefits of AI-powered governance. "In the last three months, I have given training to sarpanches, panches, panchayat members and panchayat secretaries of 120 panchayats of many states on how to use AI. Of these 27 panchayats were from Haryana," he said.

Jaglan said, "When we gave training to sarpanches, most of them told us they have never sent an e-mail to officials as they do not know what to write. Hence we gave them training on how to use AI in writing and then send a mail."

The Union panchayati raj ministry has been using its portal eGramSwaraj to make maximum use of AI, making it available in 22 Indian languages.

Branding gram panchayats over social media

Jaglan said that AI tools can also facilitate branding of panchayats, especially over social media whose potential is largely unexplored due to lack of awareness. Jaglan believes that AI-powered panchayats can bring revolutionary change in rural governance. "I am confident that AI-powered panchayats will improve the quality of life for rural citizens and make village councils more accountable and transparent," he said.

15
injured in Florida when a train hit a truck that drove onto tracks after another train passed

GLOBAL WEATHER
LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	14	01	SNY	Los Angeles	23	13	SNY
Colombo	28	27	LR	Melbourne	21	18	SNY
Dhaka	28	21	LR	Moscow	1	0	LC
Dubai	27	23	SNY	New York	4	-2	SNY
Houston	17	11	SNY	Singapore	31	26	SNY
Istanbul	14	11	SNY	Toronto	1	-2	LR
London	13	11	LR	Washington	4	-2	SNY

Trump sides with Musk as H1-B visas roil MAGA camp

The prez-elect's position is in contrast with his earlier calls for immigration curbs

A file photo of Donald Trump and Elon Musk in Texas to see the Starship lift off | AP

WASHINGTON

DONALD Trump weighed in on Saturday in a bitter debate dividing his traditional supporters and tech barons such as Elon Musk, saying that he backs a special visa programme that helps highly skilled workers enter the country.

"I've always liked the (H1-B) visas, I have always been in favour of the visas, that's why we have them" at Trump-owned facilities, the president-elect told the *New York Post* in his first public comments on the matter since it flared up this week. An angry back-and-forth, largely between Silicon Valley's Musk and traditional anti-immigration Trump backers, has erupted in fiery fashion, with Musk even vowing to "go to war" over the issue.

Trump's insistent calls for sharp curbs on immigration were central to his election victory in November over President Joe Biden. Trump has vowed to deport all undocumented immigrants and limit legal immigration.

But tech entrepreneurs such as Musk – as well as Vivek Ramaswamy, who is set to join Musk in co-chairing a government cost-cutting panel – say the United States produces too few highly skilled graduates, and they fervently champion the H1-B programme.

Musk, who migrated from South Africa on an H1-B, posted on Thursday on his X platform that luring elite engineering talent from abroad was "essential for America to keep winning."Adding acrimony to the debate was a post from Ramaswamy, the son of immigrants from India, who deplored an "American culture" that he said venerates mediocrity, adding that the United States risks having "our asses handed to us by China."

That angered several prominent conservatives who were backing Trump long before Musk noisily joined their cause this year, going on to pump more than $250 million into the Republican's campaign. "Looking forward to the inevitable divorce between President Trump and Big Tech," said Laura Loomer, a far-right MAGA figure known for her conspiracy theories, who often flew with Trump on his campaign plane.

> **Looking forward to the inevitable divorce between President Trump and Big Tech. We have to protect President Trump from the technocrats**
>
> Laura Loomer, a far-right MAGA figure, who flew with Trump on his campaign plane

"We have to protect President Trump from the technocrats."

She and others said Trump should be promoting American workers and further limiting immigration. Musk, who had already infuriated some Republicans after leading an online campaign that helped tank a bipartisan budget deal last week, fired back at his critics.

Posting on X, he warned of a "MAGA civil war" over the visas, which he said were critical "for those who want America to win." Musk swore at one critic, adding: "I will go to war on this issue."

That, in turn, drew a volley from Trump strategist Steve Bannon, who wrote on the Gettr platform that the H1-B programme brings in migrants who are essentially "indentured servants" working for less than American citizens would. In a striking jab at Trump's close friend Musk, Bannon called the Tesla CEO a "toddler." Some of Trump's original backers say they fear he is falling under the sway of big donors from the tech world and drifting away. *AFP*

Key ally demands Moscow apologise for plane crash

BAKU

AZERBAIJANI President Ilham Aliyev accused Russia on Sunday of firing at an Azerbaijan Airlines passenger jet before it crashed and of initially trying to cover up the cause of the fatal disaster, demanding that Moscow admit guilt.

Aliyev made the accusation in an interview to state media at Baku airport four days after the AZAL plane crashed in Kazakhstan, killing 38 people of the 67 people on board.

Azerbaijani officials have suggested the aircraft was hit by a Russian air-defence system as it tried to land in Grozny, capital of the Russian republic of Chechnya.

Aliyev's unusually forthright accusation of his country's traditional ally came a day after he spoke by phone to Russian President Vladimir Putin. A Kremlin statement on the phone call gave no indication that Putin had claimed responsibility for the crash.

"The facts are that the Azerbaijani civilian plane was damaged from the outside over Russian territory, near the city of Grozny, and almost lost control," Aliyev told state television. "We also know that electronic warfare systems put our plane out of control... At the same time, as a result of fire from the ground, the tail of the plane was also severely damaged," he said.

A file photo of Putin with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev | AP

Aliyev said that while "of course, our plane was hit by accident", Baku was angry that Moscow had apparently tried to hide the cause of the crash and demanded its ally admit what happened.

He said it was "regrettable and surprising" that Moscow "put forward theories" that, he said, "clearly showed he Russian side wanted to cover up the issue".

"For the first three days, we heard nothing from Russia except some absurd theories," he said, adding that these included the plane hitting a flock of birds. He called the theory "completely removed" from reality, pointing out that the plane's "fuselage is riddled with holes".

Russia has said Grozny was being attacked by Ukrainian drones the day the AZAL flight tried to land. Aliyev urged Moscow to issue a public apology to his country, saying Baku had made official "demands" to Russia two days ago.

"First, the Russian side must apologise to Azerbaijan.

"Second, it must acknowledge its guilt. *AFP*

North Korea to implement toughest policy against US: Kim

SEOUL

NORTH Korean leader Kim Jong Un vowed to implement the "toughest" anti-US policy, state media reported on Sunday, less than a month before Donald Trump takes office as US president.

Trump's return to the White House raises prospects for high-profile diplomacy with North Korea. During his first term, Trump met Kim three times for talks on the North's nuclear programme. Many experts however say a quick resumption of Kim-Trump summitry is unlikely as Trump would first focus on conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. North Korea's support for Russia's war against Ukraine also poses a challenge to efforts to revive diplomacy, experts say.

During a five-day plenary meeting of the ruling Workers' Party that ended on Friday, Kim called the US "the most reactionary state that regards anti-communism as its invariable state policy." Kim said that the US-South Korea-Japan security partnership is expanding into "a nuclear military bloc for aggression."

"This reality clearly shows to which direction we should advance and what we should do and how," Kim said, according to the official *Korean Central News Agency*. It said Kim's speech "clarified the strategy for the toughest anti-US counteraction to be launched aggressively" by North Korea for its long-term national interests and security.

KCNA didn't elaborate on the anti-US strategy. But it said Kim set forth tasks to bolster military capability through defence technology advancements and stressed the need to improve the mental toughness of North Korean soldiers. The previous meetings between Trump and Kim put an end to threats of destruction. *AP*

ASIA MATTERS

SINGAPORE

NEXT-GEN HAS THEIR TASK CUT OUT: MINS

Finding ways to keep Singapore economically relevant will be an important task for the country's fourth-generation (4G) leaders in the coming years, Law and Home Affairs Minister K Shanmugam said on Dec 29, *The Straits Times* reported. The country's high land and labour costs will make foreign investors question why they should plough money into Singapore, and local small and medium-sized enterprises are also struggling as it is "not easy to find labour", said Shanmugam. He added that these are serious issues that Singapore will need to address

THAILAND

FUGITIVE EX-PM COULD AVOID JAIL

Fugitive former prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra could be eligible to out-of-prison detention if her jail sentence is shortened by one year, *Bangkok Post* reported. As Yingluck had been sentenced to five years in jail, she could be eligible to out-of-prison detention if her term was commuted by one year, said Department of Corrections chief

INDONESIA

TYCOON JAILED FOR 15 YRS FOR CORRUPTION

A Jakarta court on Friday sentenced business tycoon Budi Said to 15 years in prison and imposed a massive financial penalty after he was found guilty of fraud involving gold purchases from state-owned supplier Aneka Tambang (Antam), *Jakarta Globe* reported. The court also ordered Budi to return $2.15 million to the state to compensate for losses incurred by Antam. Failure to pay the penalty within a month of the verdict becoming final will result in an additional eight years of imprisonment. Presiding Judge Tony Irfan said Budi was convincingly proven guilty of corruption

Georgia joining EU got complicated as Kavelashvili is sworn in as prez

TBILISI

FORMER soccer player Mikheil Kavelashvili was formally inaugurated as president of Georgia on Sunday, cementing the ruling party's grip in what the opposition calls a blow to the country's EU aspirations and a victory for former imperial ruler Russia.

Outgoing pro-Western Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili said on Sunday morning that she would vacate her residence at the Orbeliani Palace in Tbilisi, but insisted she was still the legitimate office holder.

"I will come out of here, come out to you and be with you. ... This presidential residence was a symbol as long as there was a president here who was legitimate. I bring legitimacy with me," Zourabichvili told a crowd of supporters outside the palace.

Mikheil Kavelashvili

She called Kavelashvili's inauguration a "parody."

Kavelashvili, 53, who was the only candidate on the ballot, easily won the vote earlier in December given the Georgian Dream party's control of a 300-seat electoral college that replaced direct presidential elections in 2017. It is made up of members of Parliament, municipal councils and regional legislatures.

In his speech, Kavelashvili promised to be "everyone's president, regardless of whether they like me or not." He called for the nation to unite behind him around "shared values, the principles of mutual respect, and the future we should build together."

Georgian Dream retained control of Parliament in the South Caucasus nation in an Oct 26 election that the opposition alleges was rigged with Moscow's help.

The party has vowed to continue pushing toward accession in the European Union but also wants to "reset" ties with Russia.

Georgia's outgoing president and main pro-Western parties have boycotted the post-election parliamentary sessions and demanded a rerun of the ballot. *AP*

Netanyahu is getting his prostate removed; Levin named acting PM

TEL AVIV

ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is having his prostate removed on Sunday, his office said, a procedure that comes as he manages multiple crises at once, including the ongoing war in Gaza and his own trial for alleged corruption.

Netanyahu's office said that Justice Minister Yariv Levin, a close Netanyahu ally, would serve as acting prime minister during the procedure.

With so much at stake in the turbulent region, Netanyahu's health in wartime is a concern for both Israelis and the wider world.

According to Netanyahu's office, the Israeli leader was diagnosed with a urinary tract infection on Wednesday stemming from a benign enlargement of his prostate. The infection was treated successfully with antibiotics but a procedure on Sunday will remove his prostate.

Complications from prostate enlargement are common in men in their 70s and 80s, Shay Golan, head of the oncology urology service at Israel's Rabin Medical Center, told Israeli Army Radio.

Golan spoke in general terms about the procedure and was not involved in Netanyahu's care or treatment.

He said that an enlarged prostate can block proper emptying of the bladder, leading to a build-up of urine that can then lead to an infection or other complications. After medicinal treatment, doctors can recommend a procedure to remove the prostate to prevent future blockages, Golan said.

In Netanyahu's case, because the prostate is not cancerous, Golan said doctors will likely perform an endoscopic surgery, which is carried out by inserting small instruments into a body cavity, rather than making any surgical cuts in the abdomen to reach the prostate.

The procedure lasts about an hour, Golan said, and recovery is quick. Golan also said that aside from catheter use for one to three days after the procedure, patients can return to normal activity without any significant limitations.

China unveils prototype of world's fastest bullet train

BEIJING

CHINA on Sunday unveiled an updated model of its high-speed bullet train which its manufacturer claims reached speeds of 450 kmph during the test runs, making it the world's fastest high-speed train.

According to the China State Railway Group Co (China Railway), the new model, known as the CR450 prototype, will further shorten travel time and improve connectivity, making travel more convenient and efficient for the country's vast passengers.

The CR450 prototype reached a test speed of 450 kmph, with key performance indicators operational speed, energy consumption, interior noise, and braking distance setting a new international benchmark, official media here reported.

It is significantly faster than the CR400 Fuxing high-speed rail (HSR) currently in service, which operates at speeds of 350 kmph, *Xinhua* reported.

China Railway will arrange a series of line tests for the prototypes and optimise technical indicators to ensure the CR450 enters commercial service as soon as possible, it said.

According to the latest official figures, China's operational HSR tracks have reached about 47,000 kms, connecting major cities in the country.

Though not profitable, China says the HSR network expansion has played a crucial role in the nation's economic and social development, reducing travel times and boosting industrial development along railway routes.

According to internal surveys, the Beijing-Shanghai train service was the most profitable, while the networks in other cities have yet to turn lucrative.

In recent years, China's HSR exported its network in Thailand and Indonesia. *PTI*

EXPRESS READ

Musk backing AfD causes uproar

Elon Musk caused uproar after backing Germany's far-right party in a major newspaper ahead of key parliamentary elections, leading to the resignation of the paper's opinion editor in protest. Musk's guest opinion piece for *Welt am Sonntag* owned by the Axel Springer Group published in German over the weekend, was the second time this month he supported the Alternative for Germany, or AfD.

Croatia holds presidential election

Croatia's left-leaning president, an outspoken critic of Western military support for Ukraine in its war against Russia, is running for reelection in the Adriatic Sea state, but is unlikely to get an outright majority in the first round of voting on Sunday. President Zoran Milanovic faces seven other contenders, including Dragan Primorac, the candidate of the ruling Croatian Democratic Union. The two are expected to face off in the second round.

Chad votes in parliamentary election as military rule ends

N'DJAMENA

CHADIANS voted on Sunday in a parliamentary and regional election that will end a three-year transitional period from military rule but which the main opposition is boycotting after accusing authorities of not overseeing a credible electoral process.

The parliamentary election is the first in more than a decade in Chad and comes months after the junta leader, Mahamat Idriss Deby, won a disputed presidential vote that was meant to return democracy. Deby took power in 2021 following the death of his father and longtime president Idriss Deby Itno, who spent three decades in power.

The oil-exporting country of 18 million people, among Africa's poorest, had not had a free and fair transfer of power since it became independent from France in 1960. The elections this year are the first in junta-led countries in Africa's Sahel region to hold a promised but delayed return to democracy.

At least 8 million voters are registered to elect 188 legislators in the Central African nation's new National Assembly. Representatives at the provincial and municipal levels will also be elected. Results are expected in about two weeks. More than 10 opposition parties are boycotting the vote, including the main Transformers party, whose candidate, Succes Masra, came second in the presidential election.

The party has criticised the parliamentary election, as well as the presidential vote that many observers were banned from, as a "charade" and a ploy for Deby to remain in power to continue a "dynasty."

Masra briefly served as prime minister earlier this year after returning from exile before he resigned to run for president. On Saturday, he alleged that results of the vote would be tampered with and told voters, "It is better to stay at home."

The opposition Group of the Cooperation of Political Actors, which also called for the election boycott, continues to dispute Deby's presidential win. Sunday's election comes at a time whe it is battling several security challenges. *AP*

$643.7 MN India's exports to Australia rose 64.4% in Nov.

Discount broking is the future: HDFC Sec CEO

Investors are now choosing only discount platforms; full-service brokerages might only cater to HNIs in future

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

HDFC Securities, which entered the discount-broking space a little over a year ago, expects its low-cost broking arm HDFC Sky to turn profitable in the next fiscal.

This is on the back of the runaway success it notched up in the past 13 months in terms of customer acquisition (over 1.1 million as of December) and the rising trading volume on the platform. The company is not planning any share sale, citing strong financial performance.

The full-service brokerage and its discount broking arm have added 1.2 million new customers this fiscal so far, taking the total to 6.1 million. However, the number of active clients remains at 1.4 million. Of this, total additions - as much as 1.1 million - have been onboarded through the new platform. "Discount broking is the future of broking in our country and full-service brokerages will get limited to just HNIs (high-net-worth individuals), going forward. This is because a large majority of investors coming to the market now are all choosing only discount platforms," Dhiraj Relli, MD & chief executive of HDFC Securities, told TNIE. "The message that customers are choosing discount brokers is clear from the huge number of customers we've added in just about 13 months alone—1.1 million, and this is also underlined by the much faster growth of similar other platforms," he said.

On the profitability part, Relli said, "Next fiscal we should

be making cash profit and in FY27 we should break-even." This is despite the fact that he has no plans to increase the charges for retail customers on the Sky platform. Currently it charges ₹20 per order for buying and selling.

HDFC Securities, which offers the longest days of margin funding—as many as 270 trading days--has a large margin funding book of ₹7,500 crore and charges 13-15% interest on margin funding per month, making it a very profitable revenue stream. Relli expects to close the current fiscal with a revenue of ₹3,300 crore and a net income of ₹1,165 crore, up from ₹950 crore of net profit last fiscal.

"We don't need capital at all. So there is no need for fund raising through an IPO. Last year also we raised ₹1,000 crore through a rights issue and had earned ₹950 crore in net income," Relli said.

Overall, he said investors should not expect high returns from the market in 2025, as he sees only modest returns from Nifty.

"The Nifty shows only modest upside potential, as it is now trading at 23xFY25 and 20.5x FY26 consensus EPS, indicating modest upside potential in the next 12 months. This implies that investors may face a period of lower-than-expected returns, as the broader market may have already priced in some of the expected growth," he said, adding the Nifty may touch 26580 points sometime next year.

Since the advent of the low/discount broking spearheaded by Zerodha—the most profitable brokerage for the past many years—full-service players have been losing market share and today discount broker Groww is the largest with over 13.1 million active customers followed by Zerodha at 8.1 million, Angel One at 7.6 million and Upstox at 2.9 million.

Groww unseated Zerodha last year to become the largest player and since then has had a runaway success in terms of customers but not in terms of profit or revenue, where Zerodha is the undisputed leader with ₹4,700 crore of net income in FY24.

IN CONVERSATION

SUPARNA MITRA
CEO, Watches & Wearables, Titan Company

'Analog watches see strong growth, focus on premiumisation'

TITAN is celebrating its 40th anniversary and the renowned watch company recently introduced a flying Tourbillon watch, as part of its limited edition - the 'Commemorative' Collection, consisting of 4 watches. In an interaction with TNIE's **Uma Kannan**, Suparna Mitra, CEO-Watches & Wearables, Titan Company, said it has been a fantastic journey of four decades and that they are bringing outstanding designs and compelling stories through their watches. Edited excerpts:

Are you seeing any shift in consumer behaviour in terms of the preference? Titan is continuing to bet on analog watches. How is the segment growing?

There has been growing interest among consumers in analog watches. Many people are thinking of watches, wearing watches. Secondly, I would say gifting is a very big part of what we do. I think post COVID, there was a flurry of gifting, including wedding gifting. There are like millions of weddings going on. So, there are some larger pieces which are helping this growth. I think a lot of it is also the kind of innovation and really outstanding designs and compelling stories that we're bringing through our watches that consumers are responding to and saying 'this is great and I would like one'. We grew 19% y-o-y basis in the second quarter and the analog segment has been recording strong growth.

How are you looking at the premiumisation trend?

It is a continuing trend. We have about 27% market share in analog, which includes below ₹1,000 where we hardly play. It also includes the very premium and luxury. For the first time, we are having a watch for about ₹10 lakh. We have watches in Nebula, which is a gold range up to ₹8-8.5 lakh, but we did not have any watches for about ₹10 lakh. It is an area where there is a lot of demand and interest. People are going deep into what the watch is, what is the offering? What is special about it? There are so many watch collector communities and because of social media, they get together and there is a lot of online conversation.

Smart watches have seen tremendous penetration in the last three years and right now, the premium watches are all about the 35 plus age group, simply because it is the earning group.

What about wearables and how the segment is growing?

We have a very good market share and we are building on it. The category itself has gone through some decline and correction, but we hope that it stabilises. Competition is high in the segment and there was not enough differentiation. All the brands were coming out with similar smart watches, which led to price reduction and price war, and it also led to extra supplies. So overall, it has been a situation where it got kind of commoditized, because there was no real difference, and now the correction has happened.

Smart watches have seen tremendous penetration in the last three years and right now, the premium watches are all about the 35 plus age group, simply because it is the earning group. Even in the 20 to 35 age group, we find that there's a lot of interest in watches. It's a very important fashion accessory. So, with fashion being so prominent, everyone wanting to be fashionable, then the watch is a very crucial accessory.

Tell us about the limited edition of the Commemorative collection.

This is related to 40 years. We have launched the commemorative limited collection of 1984 (Titan began its journey in 1984). We have The Classique Case (inspired from the two of the original bestsellers in Titan) and limited to 1000 numbered watches; the moonphase multifunction watch, which is limited to 900 numbered watches. These two are reissues of very famous and popular watches in the 1990s. We have also launched the Gold Mechanical Watch with the slim mechanical movement, and the fourth one is Flying Tourbillon Movement, the 7TH1 Calibre, this limited-edition timepiece is very special as it took a lot of R&D to put it together. It is a tribute to the company's legacy and it is priced at ₹26 lakh.

MONEY-WISE

SHOULD YOU INVEST IN PRIVATE CREDIT?

FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM
writes at www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹40 a day'

IF you are an investor in India of any size, you must have been called to participate in the private credit market. This market has grown very rapidly in the past few years. The reason is simple – Risk-adjusted-Returns.

This is also called peer-to-peer lending and it used to be exclusive for bankers or other big lenders like mutual funds, NBFC, etc. and was not available to individuals.

What is private credit?

Private credit is a loan to a business by any non-bank lender. Borrowers are typically mid-sized companies that need financing for operations, an acquisition, or to improve their balance sheet. In India, banks have some restrictions that they can't lend to retail grocery shops, restaurants, etc. This opens a huge opportunity for the small lenders to lend to them. Private lenders do not have the same restrictions and can evaluate deals independently of any regulatory body. This is called the 'small' or 'middle market' and the banks seem to be finding it difficult to lend to them. If you are an investor in debt products like fixed income securities, private credit could give you better returns for the additional risks that you are taking.

- Higher yields
- Low default rates
- Short term durations
- Not regulated much giving flexibility
- Better diversification unlike mutual funds

Private credit investments are not actively traded on any secondary exchange, so therefore investors are not subjected to Mark to Market risk and the low duration ensures that there is not much of interest rate risk.

Risks of investing

While there are obvious benefits to investing in private credit, this asset class does come with its risks too!

- If you have given a loan for 18 months, it is likely that it will take 18 months of holding. Partial liquidity is normally not available. Since this is not exactly a pool of loans, you will have to hold for the whole tenure.
- Though it feels good that there is less supervision, it also means that there is more risk.
- Some deals could be complicated – a little greed of the borrower and eagerness of the lender could lead to by-passing the process -thus again increasing the risk.

invest in private debt?

Depends on the size of an individual's investments in Debt – only a small percentage of that can be allocated to such funds.

What is the future of private credit? Expect the mutual fund industry to launch a 'private credit fund' in their portfolio of debt funds.

A private credit fund will be an investment that pools money from multiple investors and invests in private credit deals. These funds will be managed by professional investors who source, analyse, rank, grade, and manage all of the investments on behalf of the investors. Once such funds are launched, the common man will have a far better option of investing, with some professional help.

MONEY MATTERS

HOW YOUR BEHAVIOUR AFFECTS INVESTMENTS

FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

RAJAS KELKAR
(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

BEHAVIOURAL science can tell you the future of your wealth. As you welcome the New Year, you must focus on your investment beliefs, preferences and social interaction tendencies. They affect your decision-making ability. For example, a study of investors in the United States cited in the latest National Stock Exchange bulletin highlights neuroticism as a trait affecting investment decisions.

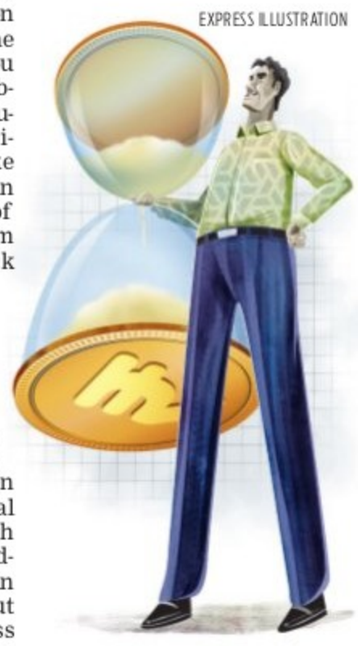
Your emotions determine the course of your actions. Negative emotions can gather pace almost immediately after you suffer losses. That could be a factor in the bad timing of entering the market. However, you may keep hanging on to those negative emotions longer than required.

Stockbrokers often mention a dark space which most investors dive into if they suffer losses more than twice. There are more than 10 crore investor accounts in India. However, most actively traded are a fraction (close to 15% or 1.5 crore). The concentration of traders is mainly in the Western parts of India if you regularly follow the data published on investor trends. Mutual Fund investors are primarily in large cities like Mumbai and Delhi more than in the hinterland. The fear of loss keeps most people from being active in the stock market.

Investment beliefs

It is possible to form investment beliefs based on data. For that, you need to take an interest and read about factors that affect interest rates and share prices. Even if you are not from a financial background, engaging with an independent financial advisor is a good idea. You can discuss your thoughts about risk in the market and assess your ability to take it. The way you invest is a function of your ability to take risks. If you speak to those who have spent years watching the stock market trends and investments, they will tell you that your confidence in your future income will determine the risk you can take. It has nothing to do with age. There is a common perception that you must minimise risk as you age.

However, you can still invest in equity markets if you are confident about your income. Retirement years are stretching further with better life expectancy. There is a good chance that you could live for more than the previous generation. You need to ensure that you can generate adequate inflation-beating returns. Your data must be about consolidating your investment beliefs around your life and financial goals.


EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

Investment preferences

Your choices will be based on your beliefs. If you use data to structure your beliefs without allowing emotions to overpower your decision-making, you may be able to arrive at your investment preferences.

In the world of investing, that is called asset allocation. You can align your investments to your financial goals. Your long-term goals can have a higher portion of the equity allocation, while short-term goals can have a combination of equity debt or fixed deposits.

If you let your fears overpower your decision-making, you will end up with all your money in the bank or in investments that barely help you cover inflation. For long-term financial goals, you must beat inflation successfully as the costs of everyday things spiral.

Social interaction

Your social interaction should be with informed people. Discuss investments with those who know a lot more than you. There is no need to act on every advice that people give you. These days, social media groups circulate a plethora of information. You can read and absorb as much as you can. However, acting on that information is a bit dangerous. You should not put your money behind something because of some random tip. Ensure that your money gets directed towards a financial goal.

VIL welcomes govt's BG waiver, says will boost 4G, 5G investment

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

TELECOM service provider Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL) has welcomed the Indian government's decision to waive the Bank Guarantee (BG) requirement for the purchase of spectrum, calling it a significant relief for the telecom industry.

The company added that this move would not only ease the financial burden on telecom operators but also boost investments in 4G and 5G network infrastructure in India.

The government's move is particularly beneficial to Indian telecom operators, especially Vodafone Idea, which has been grappling with significant financial strain.

Under the 2021 telecom reform package, the government

had already waived the BG requirement for spectrum auctions conducted after the reforms, citing that the industry had matured and no longer needed this form of financial security.

"Department of Telecommunication, Government of India further extended its support to the telecom industry by dispensing with the requirement of Bank Guarantee to be submitted for spectrum auctions held prior to reform package i.e. for spectrum auctions of 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2021, provided the pro-rated value of spectrum used from the date of allocation till the end of three (3) months after the due date of payment of next instalment is less than the value of payment made by the telecom operator on an NPV basis," said Vodafone Idea in an exchange filing.

Prior to these reforms, Vodafone Idea was required to provide BGs aggregating to approximately ₹24,800 crore for each spectrum installment, 13 months before the installment's due date for the auctions.

Reliance's refinery at Jamnagar completes 25 yrs

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

RELIANCE launched its first refinery at Jamnagar, Gujarat, 25 years ago, on December 28. Today, Jamnagar has become the world's refining hub.

When Reliance Industries, first spoke of building an oil refinery to process and convert crude oil pumped out of ground and from below seabed, into fuels like petrol (gasoline) and diesel (gasoil), majority of the experts had said that it would be impossible for an Indian company to set up the world's largest grassroots refinery in three years. But Reliance achieved that in 33 months. The first private sector refinery of India added 25% to India's total refining capacity and made India self-sufficient in transport fuels, sources said.

Australia trade pact completes two years; India exports up 14% FY24

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind-Aus ECTA), which completed two years on Sunday, has helped India increase its exports by 14% to the Indo-pacific nation in FY24. However, it is still lower than exports in 2021-22.

A press statement by the Ministry of Commerce says since the signing of ECTA, bilateral merchandise trade has more than doubled, surging from $12.2 billion in 2020-21 to $26 billion in 2022-23. Total trade, however, moderated in the year 2023-24 to $24 billion in 2023-24, with India's exports to Australia growing by 14%. "The current fiscal year continues to reflect strong momentum. Total merchandise bilat-

eral trade from April-November 2024 reached $16.3 billion," says the statement. However, after signing of the agreement, India's trade deficit with Australia had increased from $8.5 billion in 2021-22 to $12 billion in 2022-23. It fell to $8.2 billion in 2023-24. After the signing of the trade pact, exports of textiles, chemicals, and agriculture goods have shown substantial growth. It has also boosted exports on new lines of products such as gold studded with diamonds and turbojets, highlighting the diversification enabled by the agreement. When it comes to imports, India has mostly imported from Australia essential raw materials, such as metalliferous ores, cotton, wood and wood products.

According to the commerce ministry, imports from Australia have fuelled India's industries, contributing to the win-win nature of this partnership. Imports of electronics and engineering have room for growth. Both the countries are committed to building on the momentum created by the ECTA, and to achieve the target of trade to reach AUD 100 billion by 2030 between India and Australia.

South Africa seal place in WTC final

Kagiso Rabada and Marco Jansen hung in against relentless fast bowler Mohammad Abbas for a tense two-wicket win in the first Test on Sunday to seal the Proteas' place in next year's World Test Championship final. South Africa had started this WTC cycle with a 1-1 drawn series against India before getting swept 2-0 in New Zealand.

Who will have the last laugh?

After an eventful contest between ball & bat on Day 4, final day promises to be a thriller

TNIE @ BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY
GOMESH S
MELBOURNE

Jasprit Bumrah once again stood up for India with four wickets in the second innings | PTI

IT is finally here. Day five of a Test match between India and Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. In what has been a contest that saw multiple records get made over the past four days, Australia went into the sunset on Sunday with 228/9, leading by 333 runs.

The last time these two teams played a fifth day of a Test in a Test fixture that was not affected by rain, was the 2023 World Test Championship Final. In the time since Australia have played 18 Tests and India 16 (three Tests between the two) and not one have gone into the final day without the weather playing its part.

Here, in Melbourne, the first and foremost credit perhaps would go to the MCG head curator Matt Page who promised an entertaining contest. However, no one deserves more than a small group of players who made it possible. Jasprit Bumrah who kept India in the contest through the series while scaling one mount after another on a personal front has taken eight wickets in the match and almost had his ninth in the final over of Sunday. Nitish K Reddy and Washington Sundar showed their value with the bat and ensured the visitors did not succumb.

Then, of course, there were partnerships between Marnus Labuschagne-Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon-Scott Boland. When Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Akash Deep were breathing fire on a day where the ball seamed more than it ever did over the past three days, Australia were on the ropes. They were down to 91/6 and the lead was less than 200.

However, as he has done on numerous occasions, Cummins put up a defiant effort along with Labuschagne. Such was the impact Bumrah had that even the latter was protecting Cummins from the Indian pacer. He had already taken four wickets in the first innings and added four more in the second, becoming the first-ever bowler in the history of the sport to take 200 Test wickets at an average of less than 20. They knew that every over, hour and session they spent in the middle, Bumrah would be overworked.

It has been India's go-to strategy. Start with Bumrah, rotate around the rest for a while and bring him back. Even on Sunday, he had bowled 24 off the 82 overs India sent down despite them fielding six bowlers.

Australians did not want to face Bumrah. They tried to negate him as much as possible while keeping the scoreboard moving against others. That they had already secured a 105-run lead helped. Labuschagne and Cummins put on a valiant stand before Siraj had the last laugh. From there on, the lower order frustrated the visitors more. It all came down to Lyon and Boland, who added 55 runs before the stumps were drawn.

And the end did not come without drama. In the last over, Bumrah, running in, trying to give his everything, nicked Lyon and KL Rahul caught it on the rebound. Just when it seemed like he had gotten his third fifer of the series, it was called no ball.

Although there is no guarantee that Australia will declare overnight, even if they do, it will not be easy. With 98 overs to play, on a pitch that has started to see uneven bounce, Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Boland would be raring to go. What India would have for sure is the backing of the crowd. While strong Indian support was always expected, this match has surpassed expectations. With the chance of making another record for most attendance for any Test at the MCG, CA has slashed the prices to ten dollars per adult.

Thirty seven days since Bumrah led India onto the field in Perth, the series is still alive. One of the World Test Championship Final spots is still up for grabs. And with the rain forecast in Sydney, it all might just come down to the one last day at the G. Expect Cummins and Rohit Sharma to put themselves on the line in what is going to be yet another day of enthralling Test cricket.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

SCOREBOARD

Australia 1st Innings 474. India 1st Innings (O/n 358/9): Nitish c Starc b Lyon 114; Siraj n.o 4. **Extras** (lb 2, nb 4, w 5) 11. **Total** (119.3 ovs) 369. **FoWs:** 1-8, 2-51, 3-153, 4-154, 5-159, 6-191, 7-221, 8-348, 9-350, 10-369. **Bowling:** Starc 25-2-86-0; Cummins 29-6-89-3; Scott Boland 27-7-57-3; Lyon 28.3-4-96-3; Marsh 7-1-28-0. Head 3-0-11-0. **Australia 2nd Innings:** Konstas b Bumrah 8; Khawaja b Siraj 21; Labuschagne lbw Siraj 70; Smith c Pant b Siraj 13; Head c Nitish b Bumrah 1; Marsh c Pant b Bumrah 0; Carey b Bumrah 2; Cummins c Sharma b Jadeja 41; Starc run out 5; Lyon 41 n.o; Boland 10 n.o. Extras (lb 9, nb 6, w 1) 16. **Total** (82 ovs) 228/9. **FoWs:** 1-20, 2-43, 3-80, 4-85, 5-85, 6-91, 7-148, 8-156, 9-173. **Bowling:** Bumrah 24-7-56-4; Akash Deep 17-4-53-0; Siraj 22-4-66-3; Jadeja 14-2-33-1; Nitish 1-0-4-0; Washington 4-0-7-0.

MAKING OF THE CHAMP

MEET THE PARENTS WHO KEPT NITISH'S DREAMS ALIVE

GOMESH S @ Melbourne

MUTYALA Reddy was the star at lunch on day four of the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. In fact, his entire family was. His daughter Tejaswi joined the commentary for ABC Radio to talk about the journey her brother, Nitish K Reddy, and what the family has been through to get here.

While Nitish had his moment of glory late on Saturday evening, Mutyala had his own to cherish when he ran into the former Indian captain Sunil Gavaskar. An out-and-out emotional person, Mutyala could not resist tearing up in front of Gavaskar. He touched the former India captain's feet who shares the name of the ongoing series with Allan Border, and so did the entire family.

Shortly after, he was once again swarmed by the Indian media, doing interviews one after another. One of the questions were about his meeting with Gavaskar and why he reacted the way he did. Mutyala got emotional trying to explain. "I know where I come from," he said, before adding, "No one knew me if I went from my village to another. Today, forget India, Australians are asking for selfies. I cannot express how happy I am."

"To meet Gavaskar sir, I am not exaggerating, he is like a God to me. Sachin Tendulkar gaaru, Gavaskar gaaru, Rahul Dravid gaaru all these people are looked at as Gods of sport. To meet them, it felt like meeting God. That is why I asked for his blessings and fell on his feet. When someone like him is in happy tears because of my son what is wrong in getting his blessings?"

Where did Mutyala come from? A humble government employee who wanted to make his son, who was as mischievous as any kid his age would be — a cricketer. So much so that he had to quit his job because he was about to be transferred to Udaipur. While Nitish was coming up the ranks, he had not even played for Andhra yet and Mutyala had 25 years of service left. Confused by the decisions, he sat down with his wife Manasa and discussed. "I thank her a lot. If she had questioned me that day I would have gone for the job but when I said what I said she responded by saying anything is fine with me."

From that day till the pandemic, Nitish's cricket was his dad's full-time job. He would go to the ground in the morning with Nitish and come back with him only in the evening. Even if he was the only one on the ground where Nitish was playing, Mutyala was there. When things went well, he would come back home happy and if it didn't his wife would know and try to balance it out with jokes in the evening.

Nitish K Reddy (R) with his father Mutyala Reddy | INSTAGRAM

Through all this Nitish remained the mischievous kid who loved cricket. He would hit the ball into neighbour's house or throw stones at the mango trees on the way back from school. It was only when the pandemic hit, that Nitish changed upside down. He saw the struggles, especially financial ones, the family went through and realised he had to take up responsibility.

Manasa too had a conversation with him. "I told him 'How daddy was when he got married and how he is now. You have to do it for him and take him to a good position.' He said that he would do it. He did what I asked him to do," said the happy mother.

The changeover was such that even Mutyala and Manasa could not believe it. Nitish started focusing on his fitness all by himself and told the parents that they did not need to worry. He stuck to the diet regimes that were needed and it started showing. He used to give Manasa the daily requirement and it was followed to the T. Once the results started coming his confidence grew and it in turn helped him develop into the player that he is today.

Even when the family arrived in Melbourne and Mutyala told him how proud he was, Nitish was quick to respond: "One thing he said 'Daddy don't worry there is so much we are going to see.' Yesterday he showed by smashing a hundred. Everybody keeps asking what is that belief you have in Nitish why did you leave the job based on it… it happened yesterday. He told us there was a lot more to come and see and the next evening in 24 hours, he showed us. If you don't believe in such a son, who are you going to believe in? He is a God-given gift to us," Mutyala added.

Manasa had her moment when she met Nitish after the century at the hotel. "First I met him after his Hundred, he asked me 'mummy are you happy' I said 'full happy nana'. So many happy tears," she recalled.

For Nitish, it was all about repaying the faith they had in him and doing everything he could to contribute to the team. That in essence has been the story of the Reddy family. It is one of belief, trust and sacrifice. And of course, years and years of hard work.

The Boxing Day Test match is still in contention and Nitish is still very much confident of turning things around on Monday. But when the series is done, when he finally goes back home to Visakhapatnam, Manasa will be waiting with his favourite Gongura Mutton. Even though he might still resist and stick to his diet, for once, Nitish might be able to pause, soak it all in and enjoy his favourite food made by Amma.

Jamshedpur FC pip Kerala Blasters in ISL

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICES @ Chennai

PRATIK Chaudhari's goal proved to be the difference-maker as Jamshedpur FC edged Kerala Blasters FC 1-0 in the ongoing Indian Super League at the JRD Tata Sports Complex in Jamshedpur on Sunday.

With the three points, Jamshedpur climbed to fourth spot. This was their seventh win of the season and they now have a tally of 21 points. For the away team, this was their eighth loss of the season and they remian in 10th position.

Coming into the contest, Kerala Blasters were unbeaten in their last six encounters against Jamshedpur (four wins and two draws). That streak ended thanks to Pratik's strike.

Man City stop the rot with victory

AGENCIES @ London

MANCHESTER City provided Pep Guardiola some relief with a 2-0 victory at Leicester to secure just a second win in 14 games for the crisis-hit English champions on Sunday.

Savinho and Erling Haaland struck either side of half-time as City ended a run of eight away games without a win. The performance was still far from the standards that Guardiola's side have set in winning an unprecedented four consecutive English top-flight titles.

But the effusive celebrations of Haaland's header 16 minutes from time showed that three points was all that mattered for the visitors to at least temporarily halt their slump. Victory lifts City up to fifth but they are still 11 points behind leaders Liverpool, who have two games in hand.

Guardiola made just one change from the 1-1 Boxing Day draw against Everton as Kevin De Bruyne replaced his Belgian international colleague Jeremy Doku.

Erling Haaland (R) celebrates with Savinho against Leicester City | AFP

De Bruyne's fitness struggles have played a part in City's slump and he immediately showed what Guardiola's men have been missing for most of the season. Rico Lewis picked out De Bruyne, who cushioned a cross into the path of Haaland but his low effort was well saved by Leicester's stand-in goalkeeper Jakub Stolarczyk.

Leicester have now lost their last four games after a bright start to Ruud van Nistelrooy's reign. The Foxes were left to rue not taking their chances to inflict more misery on a City side still showing a clear lack of confidence.

Any time the home side crossed into City territory in the first half they appeared a major threat. Jamie Vardy would surely have won a penalty had he not strayed offside before being brought down by Stefan Ortega, while James Justin's header hit the post after a goalmouth scramble. City, though, got the crucial opening goal on 21 minutes as Savinho scored the first goal for Manchester City.

Results: Tottenham 2-2 Wolves; Fulham 2-2 Bournemouth; Everton 0-2 Nottm Forest; Crystal Palace 2-1 Southampton; Leicester 0-2 Man City.

EXPRESS READ

Shooter Ashi clinches women's 3P nat'l title

BHOPAL: Local shooter Ashi Chouksey overcame a strong field, that had the likes of Olympians Anjum Moudgil and Shriyanka Sadangi, to clinch her maiden national title in the 50m rifle 3-positions event here on Sunday. Ashi shot a 466.7, a full 3.1 points clear of Anjum at her home range.

Haryana Steelers win maiden PKL title

PUNE: Haryana Steelers, who finished top of the table in the league stage, produced an outstanding display as they went onto clinch their maiden Pro Kabbadi League crown, after they defeated the Patna Pirates 32-23, at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Balewadi, Pune.

West Bengal enter Santosh Trophy final

HYDERABAD: West Bengal edged past defending champions Services 4-2 to enter the final of the 78th National Football Championship for the Santosh Trophy here on Sunday. The winners led 3-0 at half time. The win marked West Bengal's 47th appearance in the tournament's final.

Green evolution on PGTI tour

Under president Kapil Dev's leadership, the 2024 PGTI season was high-yielding across the board. Here are some highlights...

VEER STEALS SHOW

With two wins and nine top-10 finishes, **Veer Ahlawat** was the standout player. He finished as No 1 in the PGTI ranking, earning a record-breaking ₹1,56,35,724, eclipsing the previous high set in 2023. The top-10, top-20, and top-30 earners all surpassed ₹44 lakh, ₹31 lakh, and ₹22 lakh, respectively.

EMERGING TALENT

Shaurya Binu (two-time winner) and Shaurya Bhattacharya (Rookie of the Year) solidified their status as future stars.

EYE ON FUTURE

PGTI will continue to focus on nurturing talent, expanding the tour's reach and establishing Indian golf on the global stage.

COMPETITIVE SPIRIT & PRIZE BOOST

There were 19 different winners across 21 events with four first-time winners, highlighting the growing competitiveness in the field. The season witnessed a total of 21 events with an all-time high prize pool of ₹33 crore.

FOREIGN PRESENCE

The season witnessed a record number of international players from countries like the USA, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Chile, Japan and South Korea, joining the tour, elevating its global profile.

Finish Line 2024

The highs & lows of 2024

A cricket World Cup, half a dozen Olympic medals, two chess world champions and a historic double in Chess Olympiad, the year 2024 gave Indian sports fans many reasons to celebrate. Besides, there were heartbreaks as well with New Zealand clean-sweeping Rohit Sharma & Co in a three-Test series, shuttlers and boxers returning empty-handed from Paris. A look at the highs and lows of 2024...

T20 World Cup

Cricket connoisseurs from the country were awaiting an ICC title for more than a decade and their prayers were finally answered in June when India defeated South Africa in the final to lift the T20 World Cup. Since 2013, when they last won an ICC title (Champions Trophy), Indian cricket team had endured heartbreaking losses in the knockouts, including 2023 ODI World Cups. The T20 trophy in Barbados healed all those wounds and restored fans' faith in their favourite stars.

Euphoria in chess

Chess witnessed an unprecedented success as 18-year-old D Gukesh became the youngest-ever world champion followed by Koneru Humpy's triumph at the Women's World Rapid Chess Championship. Before these twin titles, India achieved stellar success at the Chess Olympiad with the men's and women's teams winning gold.

Back-to-back Oly bronze for men's hockey team

Once a powerhouse of hockey with eight Olympic gold under their belt, the Indian men's team touched the nadir when it could not qualify for the 2008 Beijing Games. They were back on the podium in Tokyo when they won a bronze and Harmanpreet Singh and Co claimed it again in Paris by beating Spain 2-1.

Rise of para-athletes

The country's para-athletes bagged 29 medals at 2024 Paralympics for their most successful campaign ever at the Games. India finished 18th on the overall medals table, and in all, they won seven gold, nine silver and 13 bronze. Para-shooter Avani Lekhara became the first Indian woman to win two Paralympic gold.

Highs

Shooters' show in Paris

After two successive failures in the 2016 and 2020 Olympics, Indian shooters returned to winning ways, clinching three bronze in Paris. **Manu Bhaker** became the first Indian athlete to clinch two medals at the same Games. She first bagged a bronze in the women's 10m air pistol event and then teamed up with Sarabjot Singh to win bronze in the 10m air pistol mixed team event. Swapnil Kusale made it three by finishing third in the 50m rifle 3 positions.

Lows

0-3 home series loss to Kiwis

The historic 0-3 loss against visiting New Zealand in a three-Test series rattled the Indian team to the core. The clean sweep also meant India's record of not losing a home Test series since 2012 also got broken. The heartbreaking loss severely dented India's chances of making it to the third consecutive WTC final.

Shuttlers' no-show at Games

Since Saina Nehwal's bronze in 2012 Games, badminton had given the country an Olympic medal in each edition. Given the past shows, India were confident of at least a medal in Paris. Unfortunately, shuttlers turned out to be one of the biggest disappointments. Lakshya Sen reached the medal round only to lose despite winning the first game.

IOA infighting

Off the field, the year will be remembered for infighting in the Indian Olympic Association with the executive members revolting against president PT Usha. The national sports federations, too, followed the suit with most of them being embroiled in some or other controversies. The sports ministry and the Sports Authority of India only added fuel to the fire as they continued to rule with iron fist.

Football downward spiral

Indian men's football went from bad to worse as two managers combined could not find a single win. They went winless (6 losses and 5 draws) in 2024. India failed to qualify from the second round of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualification campaign. Igor Stimac, who was at the helm since 2019, got sacked. Manolo Marquez came in but could not change the script.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS
BENGALURU, MONDAY
30.12.2024

EDUCATION EXPRESS
edex
YOUR LIFE COACH

UPCOMING EXAMINATIONS

ISRO TECHNICIAN	ICSI CSEET	UCEED
Date: January 2, 2025	Date: January 11, 2025	Date: January 19, 2025

REWIND AND RESET

5 YOUNG VOICES, 1 DEFINING YEAR

EdexLive brought together five bright students from across the country: **Tarun Tapan Bhuyan** from Bhubaneswar, **Paridhi Narvar** from Delhi, **Khushi Jain** from Kolkata, **Sahejpreet Singh Matta** from Visakhapatnam, and **Sai Sharan Ballapuram** from Hyderabad to reflect on 2024, through the prism of its Top 25 defining moments. From global events that transformed into personal triumphs and lessons to national milestones — weaving a narrative of growth, and setbacks. These five students list their Top 25 moments!

ILLUSTRATION: MANDAR PARDIKAR

The Great Bharatiya Vivah: The Ambani bash

1 ANANT Ambani and Radhika Merchant's wedding ignited a media firestorm. With the estimated budget ranging from $300 million to a staggering $1 billion, the six-day affair at Antilia, Jio Convention Center, and Jamnagar, became the talk of the nation. Celebrities, politicians, and stars graced the event with a guest list that included Rihanna, Bill Gates, and the Kardashians. Million-dollar celebrity performances and jaw-dropping outfits made headlines, as did Nita Ambani's emerald necklace. The wedding was so lavish that even King Midas would've said, "That's a bit much."

"Your honour, we seem to have misplaced a ban"

2 *THE Satanic Verses* censor saga took an ironic twist in 2024 when India's courts revealed they had rummaged for the 1988 ban notification in vain. It has been 36 years since the ban on importing author Salman Rushdie's 'controversial' novel, and now, it might not officially exist, leaving legal experts perplexed. Readers were left in literary limbo as petitioner Sandipan Khan's legal crusade to read the book became a Kafka-esque tale of missing files and muddled freedom.

The Grandmaster's reign – Gukesh becomes World Chess Champion

3 GUKESH Dommaraju stunned the world by becoming the youngest World Chess Champion, defeating the biggest legends in the game with sheer tactical brilliance. His fearless moves, razor-sharp calculations, and cool-headed gameplay earned him the ultimate crown in the chess universe. The victory wasn't just a personal achievement; it was a massive milestone for Indian sports, establishing India as a global chess powerhouse. Gukesh's success reminded us that age is no barrier when talent and determination align.

Rap Wars 2024: Drake vs Lamar, a lyrical spat

4 IN 2024, the rap rivalry between Drake and Kendrick Lamar ignited with diss tracks, lawsuits, and wild accusations. What began as a playful competition in rapper Big Sean's single, *Control*, spiralled into a dramatic feud, with controversial, and at times illegal, undertones, shocking fans. While critics dubbed Lamar the winner, we must ask: At what cost? With pop culture becoming more polarised, entertainment drama often reflects the growing trend of hyper-personalised feuds.

Flawless faces, flawed justice: Menendez fix

5 NOT just for the chilling portrayal of the 1989 murders but for the internet's obsession with its heartthrob actors Cooper Koch and Nicholas Chavez who portrayed the Menendez brothers — social media users seemed ready to forgive the real-life brothers' crimes simply because the actors were so good-looking. Yes, we are referring to Netflix's *The Menendez Brothers*, which blurred the lines between glamourising real-life criminals and crafting compelling drama

Beyond AI: Is regulation on the horizon?

6 THE advancements in Artificial Intelligence have been ground-breaking. Generative AI, in particular, made significant strides, especially in content creation. However, this has raised concerns about AI's potential impact on jobs, deepfakes, and misinformation. In a pioneering move, the European Union legislated the AI Act, aimed at regulating AI development and seeking to strike a critical balance between innovation and socio-economic & ethical considerations

Emperor Penguin shores up in Australia

7 A malnourished Emperor Penguin, far from its Antarctic home, was discovered on a tourist beach in Denmark, Southwest Australia. The adult male had strayed approximately 3,500 kilometres north of its icy habitat. Wildlife experts are now caring for the penguin, ensuring its recovery. This unexpected visitor highlights the incredible journeys wildlife can undertake and the importance of conservation efforts to protect such remarkable species in changing environments.

All We Imagine as Light: India's Cannes triumph

8 INDIA took the global cinematic world by storm when filmmaker Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine as Light won the prestigious Cannes Grand Prix. This dreamlike meditation on identity, memory and loss resonated with audiences and critics. Some, like the author Judith Mackrell, have compared it to Kapadia's previous films for its poetic realism. As the Croisette buzzed with praise, the film's experimental style was deemed as a harbinger of a renaissance in Indian independent cinema, drawing comparisons to the legacy of Satyajit Ray.

Lok Sabha drama: AAP supremo behind bars

9 IN 2024, Arvind Kejriwal's arrest during the Lok Sabha elections sparked outrage among supporters who saw him as a symbol of hope. While some called it overdue justice to the Delhi liquor scam, others questioned the timing, seeing it as a calculated move. On the streets, students and workers raised their voices in anger, their chants echoing the frustration of a divided nation. For many, Kejriwal's arrest symbolised the larger struggle between democratic ideals and the harsh realities of power.

The Rise of the Right

10 A pattern that emerged, especially across major economies, was the rise of right-wing politicians & parties. **Narendra Modi** and the BJP in India, **Giorgia Meloni** and the Brothers of Italy, **Donald Trump** and the Republicans in the US, and others, won their respective elections convincingly. Moreover, seven EU member states now have far-right governments. This demonstrated how the changing socio-economic and geopolitical scenario affected voter bases.

India winning the T20 World Cup

12 A cricket match turned into a battle of resilience and leadership. South Africa, the 'Generational Chokers', faced India, the 'Chokers of the Decade,' in a high-stakes clash, with both teams unbeaten in the tournament. The air buzzed with excitement, memes, and drama, amplifying the tension of this epic showdown. It was more than a game — it symbolised overcoming failures and defying odds. The contest showcased the power of mindset and resilience, inspiring lessons that transcended the sport itself. It wasn't just about cricket; it was about rewriting narratives and embracing the spirit of triumph against all odds.

Mickey Mouse: The end of a defining era?

11 IN 2024, Mickey Mouse's original image from Steamboat Willie slipped into the public domain, marking a turning point for Disney. For years, Mickey had been synonymous with Disney's magic, joy, and nostalgia — an icon cherished by fans worldwide. But now, anyone could take his image and make it their own. The internet was flooded with reinterpretations, from memes to fan creations. While Mickey's modern form and trademarks remained intact, the moment held both excitement and loss for Disney. As copyright reform debates intensified, it became clear: Even icons like Mickey eventually became part of the public story.

Pooja Khedkar's UPSC row: Triumph or tarnish?

13 POOJA Khedkar's achievement of clearing the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) exams was overshadowed by controversy over her credentials. Critics also scrutinised her Other Backward Class (OBC) status and disability, given her family's relatively privileged background and her father's government career. Her previous legal battle over her disability status, where she failed to attend a required medical exam, added fuel to the fire. Despite the controversy, Khedkar firmly defended her hard work & innocence.

Olympic Chocolate Muffins

14 DURING the 2024 Paris Olympics, athletes were captivated by the Olympic Village's Cocolate Muffins. Norwegian swimmer Henrik Christiansen's TikTok videos, where he rated the muffins 11 out of 10, went viral, earning him the nickname Olympic Muffin Man. These indulgent treats featured a rich chocolate batter, chunks of dark and milk chocolate, and a molten chocolate centre. Approximately 2,000 muffins were consumed daily by athletes, highlighting their popularity. The recipe remains a secret, but their decadent appeal left a lasting impression on competitors.

Neighbour in turmoil: Bangladesh & student power

15 TURMOIL began with protests against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government in early June. A Supreme Court ruling invalidating job quotas for freedom fighters' children was the last straw for the aggrieved, who were further spurred on by a massacre of protesters. This sparked a student-people's uprising, which by August morphed into a movement demanding Hasina's resignation. On August 5, Hasina fled to India, triggering a constitutional crisis. The military assumed control, appointing Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus as interim leader.

Dread & devastation: Hamas' deadliest attack

16 MANY world leaders condemned Israel's "genocide" against Palestine and yet the war went on. Hamas' leaders Ismail Haniyeh and Yahya Sinwar were killed by Israeli forces, but the group persists. The conflict, marked by profound suffering and global repercussions, highlighted the enduring human toll of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle, drawing sharp criticism of both sides' actions and deepening the geopolitical crisis in the Middle East.

Swift takes over – Taylor Swift's Eras Tour breaks records

17 TAYLOR Swift's Eras Tour wasn't just a music tour — it was a global cultural movement. The concerts shattered ticket sales records, with millions of Swifties flocking to stadiums worldwide. Social media couldn't keep up with viral trends, from dazzling tour-inspired outfits to impromptu dance challenges. Every performance was a spectacle, blending nostalgia with beats. Fans sang along like their lives depended on it, creating an unforgettable collective experience. Taylor Swift didn't just dominate the music industry — she ruled the hearts of the world.

Unplugged from the Matrix

18 IN A time when human life has never been more dependent on computing, global IT outages served as an important wake-up call. The CrowdStrike incident, which affected computers running Microsoft Windows worldwide, impacted 60% of Fortune 500 corporations, led to the cancellation of 5,078 flights, and disruptions in sectors like banking and government. It is now evident that these machines and the corporations behind them are not invulnerable.

National security vs Right to Information

19 The legal proceedings surrounding Julian Assange and the widespread public support for his cause in 2024 incited intense debate about freedom of the press, government transparency, and whistleblower rights. This highlighted the delicate balance between the public's right to know and the government's interest in national security. This case has set standards for dealing with journalism and digital rights. With technology reshaping media, it is more crucial to protect press freedom.

Space duo in action – Starliner and Aditya L1

20 SPACE dreams became a reality as NASA's Starliner and ISRO's Aditya L1 soared into the skies, marking giant leaps for space exploration. Starliner's successful crewed launch boosted commercial spaceflight's potential, proving that space travel is not just for astronauts but could be for civilians too. Meanwhile, Aditya L1 embarked on India's first solar mission, setting its sights on the blazing sun to unlock cosmic secrets. These historic launches showed that humanity's cosmic ambitions are stronger than ever.

The rape-murder that shocked the nation

21 ON August 9, 2024, India mourned the brutal rape and murder of a young medical intern at RG Kar Medical College. Her peers, shattered by the loss of a friend and colleague, turned grief into action, staging protests that spotlighted systemic failures in hospital security and gender safety. Allegations of police inefficiency added to the outrage, deepening the nation's despair over recurring violence against women. Her death wasn't just a tragedy; it was a stark reminder of the urgent need for change.

When medical exam fever hit new highs

22 THE NEET controversy was brewing like a storm, with sudden rule changes, policy shifts, and intense protests dominating the headlines. Students and parents found themselves trapped in a whirlwind of legal battles. Social media exploded with memes about "becoming lawyers instead" as aspiring doctors struggled to stay focused amid the chaos. Government interventions and court rulings added to the uncertainty, but students showed remarkable resilience.

Goodbye, visionary – Ratan Tata's passing

23 THE passing of Ratan Tata marked the end of an era in global business leadership and philanthropy. Known for transforming the Tata Group into a global conglomerate, his visionary strategies reshaped industries and uplifted lives. His business achievements were only matched by his philanthropic efforts, funding education, healthcare, and rural development. Also, the death of India's former Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, cut across party lines as the world wept for the most able administrator and economist.

Oldest known lipstick traced back 5,000 years

24 ARCHAEOLOGISTS identified the world's oldest known lipstick, dating back 5,000 years, from a stone vial unearthed in southern Iran's Kerman Province. The deep red lip-paint, discovered in 2001 near the Halil River, was recently analysed by an international research team. Unlike modern lipsticks, it was likely applied with a brush. The cosmetic's composition includes hematite, providing its red hue, combined with vegetable oils and waxes. This finding offers insight into beauty practices among elite societies during the Bronze Age, highlighting the role of makeup in displaying luxury and status.

Russia: Free cancer vaccines for all?

25 RUSSIA announced the development of a cancer vaccine utilising mRNA technology, with plans for free distribution starting in early 2025. Alexander Gintsburg, Director of the Gamaleya Research Institute, stated that preclinical trials indicate the vaccine can inhibit tumour growth and prevent metastasis. AI expedited the vaccine's development, enabling customisation in under an hour. This follows President Vladimir Putin's recent remarks about progress in next-generation cancer vaccines. The vaccine aims to train the immune system to recognise and destroy cancer cells.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS City

Bengaluru Express

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
Mail us: bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com

30.12.2024
MONDAY

DAY'S DIARY

Theatre fire

On this day in 1903, the Iroquois Theatre in Chicago, Illinois, caught fire and burned. In less than 15 minutes, over 588 people died

IROQUOIS

On November 23, 1903, a new theatre opened its doors on West Randolph Street in the Loop. At the time, Chicago was trying to establish itself as a premier city

THE ACCIDENT

Mothers and children enjoying their holiday break had gathered to see *Mr Bluebeard*, an over-the-top musical comedy starring Chicago native Eddie Foy

CHANGE IN LAWS

Mayor Harrison shut down 170 theatres, halls and churches for a months-long re-inspection that left 6,000 people unemployed

Find out the latest events in the city

PG 2

Legendary cricketer Syed Kirmani celebrated two occasions on Sunday, the launch of his book on his 75th birthday at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium

(From left) Former cricketers VVS Laxman, Anil Kumble, and Rahul Dravid, along with Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy

Syed Kirmani autographs books for actors Raghu Mukherjee, Anu Prabhakar Mukherjee, and their daughter Nandana Mukherjee

NRN purchases a copy of *Stumped: Life Behind and Beyond the Twenty-Two Yards*

Former international cricketer who represented India between '64 and '79 BS Chandrasekhar and ex-captain and ex-coach of the Indian cricket team Rahul Dravid share a warm moment

Captain of the '83 World Cup-winning team Kapil Dev shakes hands with legendary spinner EAS Prasanna as cricketer Anil Kumble looks on

Cricket commentator Charu Sharma hosting the event

Syed Kirmani with Kapil Dev

Narayana Murthy greets cricketers Rahul Dravid and Anil Kumble | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

JUBILANT JUBILEE

ONE of the best wicket-keepers of his time and key member of the 1983 World Cup winning cricket team, Syed Kirmani, launched his autobiography *Stumped: Life Behind and Beyonf the Twenty-Two Yards*, on his 75th birthday on Sunday, with the who's who of Bengaluru in attendance. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Infosys founder Narayana Murthy, and former skipper Kapil Dev, took the stage to share heartwarming anecdotes. Bengaluru-based cricketers like Anil Kumble, VVS Laxman, and Rahul Dravid, alongside veterans like EAS Prasanna and BS Chandrasekhar were also in attendance.

From intricate pen-and-ink illustrations to mindful journalling tips, here is how you can make 2025 more meaningful

FRESH BEGINNINGS

POOJA DAS

AS we say goodbye to 2024 and welcome 2025, this is a time for reflection as much as preparation. It's a time to pause, take stock of the year gone by, and nurture intentions for the months ahead. For many, calendars and journals are more than functional tools-they're windows into self-expression and gateways to mindfulness. This year, artists and creators are blending creativity with purpose, offering uniquely-themed calendars and journals that inspire us to celebrate the small joys of life, reconnect with heritage, and embrace personal growth.

For artist **Diya Rajan**, her 2025 calendar is much more than a collection of dates. Titled Finding a Home, the calendar features 12 original illustrations, each with a tiny house hidden in its vibrant surroundings. Except for Jan, each month features a tiny house hidden in the illustration. The house is surrounded by larger elements like trees or tall grass, symbolising that home isn't just a physical space; it's a feeling," Rajan shares.

Inspired by her mother's encouragement of her artistic journey, Rajan designed this calendar to explore the idea of home in all its forms – be it a person, purpose, or connection. At ₹1,499, the A3-sized calendar doubles as a set of 12 art prints, allowing users to preserve the artwork long after the year ends.

Architect and multidisciplinary artist Apoorva Lakshmi R channels her love for history and animation into two distinctive calendars. The Ancient Indian Iconography calendar pairs photographs of intricate heritage patterns with quotes from Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language*. Meanwhile, the Studio Ghibli calendar celebrates the delicate pen-and-ink artistry inspired by the beloved Japanese studio. "This series encapsulated my artistic identity, making it a perfect collectible for Ghibli fans like me. Each month features one artwork with a quote by Hayao Miyazaki, offering fans unique pieces in one purchase," says Lakshmi R, also the owner of Yugen Design Studio. Apart from calendars, Lakshmi's Studio Ghibli collections also includes A5 notebooks, starting at ₹250, suitable for daily journaling.

Similar to Rajan and Lakshmi, Norzin Norbhu, a visual designer and founder of the B'luru art studio Nori Art, sees calendars and planners as a perfect medium for expressing personal growth and celebrating what matters most to them as an artist. This year, she's created two themes: Hello from Around the World, which features the word "Hello" in 12 languages, each designed as a unique stamp and The Little Joys of Life, a floral calendar celebrating simple pleasures. "As I've gotten older, I've realised that true happiness comes from simple moments-like enjoying a cup of tea or seeing someone smile. Each of the 12 months in this calendar highlights one of those small joys, with a corresponding quotation," Norbhu says. Beyond calendars, she also has a vibrant set of daily planners. "There are four different cover designs which offer a simpler, more flexible structure compared to my previous, more complex planners," she shares.

The ART OF JOURNALING

Interpersonal coach Mitisha Dhaka believes journaling is a transformative practice. For her, it's not just about organising thoughts but fostering self-awareness and emotional clarity. "Journaling allows us to slow down, reflect, and release pent-up emotions. It's a safe space to connect with ourselves," she says. For beginners, she recommends starting small, with prompts like – 'What am I feeling right now and why? What is one thing I'm grateful for today? What can I let go of to feel lighter?' Techniques like stream-of-consciousness writing, where you write freely without worrying about structure, or incorporating doodles and colours can make the practice engaging. "The key is to approach it with curiosity and self-compassion," she advises.

Philanthropist Nita Ambani recently paid a visit to a luxury jewellery brand in the city for a private shopping experience

Bejewelled in History

MAHIMA NAGARAJU

FROM the viral emerald and diamond necklace she donned for Anant Ambani's wedding to sporting Shah Jahan's jewels as a bajuband and wearing a pair of jhumkas owned by the Nizam of Hyderabad, Nita Ambani's love for luxurious jewellery with a touch of history is well documented. While visiting the city recently, she dropped by Bengaluru's historic jewellers, C Krishniah Chetty and Sons, Main Guard Cross Road to get a look at their prolific collection of jewellery.

"As someone who appreciates legacy and fine craftsmanship, Mrs Ambani was particularly intrigued by the 'Estate' collection, which features authentic pieces over 50 to 100 years old, many of which have been reclaimed from auctions around the world," said Chaitanya V Cotha, the executive director of the store, who oversaw her visit. "The store itself was thoughtfully arranged to highlight the brand's rich heritage, including its illustrious history of serving 21 royal families across six generations. A traditional South Indian meal was curated specially for Mrs Ambani, which she thoroughly enjoyed," he continued.

Sharing the family's long-standing connection with the Ambanis, Cotha said, "Kokila Ambani, has been a loyal patron for years, turning to the brand for its creations, including one piece that took six months to craft. Now, Nita Ambani too has sought the experience." Towards the end of her visit, Ambani signed a jewel-encrusted painting made by Cotha's mother, Triveni Vinod.

GRUB HUB

Aslam Gafoor (@aslamgafoor) is a seasoned hospitality professional with a rich background in business development, sales, and marketing with renowned hotels and F&B companies. With an unwavering passion for food, travel, and wines, he takes great delight in sharing his insights and experiences as a columnist.

THE QUIZ WILL BE PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Send answers to **bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com** with the subject line **'Food quiz'** The correct answers and names of the first three respondents with right answers will be featured in *CE* on Monday. The winner will receive a voucher worth ₹1,500 from Smoor Chocolates (dine-in only)**

THE RIGHT ANSWERS

1) Kürt skalács; 2) Büche; 3) Panettone

FIRST 3 TO GET IT RIGHT

1) Rahul; 2) Sujatha S; 3) Rishita

CITY READ

Mattress brand spreads festive cheer with Christmas drive

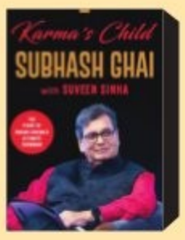
Magniflex India, a mattress brand, organised its annual 'MagnifleXmas' Christmas collection drive across cities, including Bengaluru. The initiative aimed to spread holiday joy by inviting donations of toys, sweaters, and stationery for underprivileged children. The collected items were distributed at Makkala Jagriti, a Bengaluru-based NGO that supports children's education and creativity. The company collaborated with communities nationwide, with notable contributions from many. At the distribution event, managing director Anand Nichani handed over gifts, creating a memorable moment for the children.

BOOK NOOK

Chocolate : 100 Irresistable Desserts

By Shivesh Bhatia

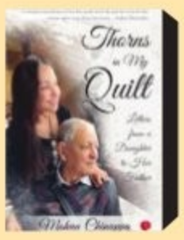
In this delectable collection of 100 recipes, Shivesh brings you a selection of his most-loved recipes, perfect for every chocolate lover.



Karma's Child : The Story of Indian Cinema's Ultimate Showman

By Subhash Ghai, Suveen Sinha

Subhash Ghai's memoir tells the story of a man who believed he was destined to direct his own future, no less dramatically than a Subhash Ghai film — and did so.



Thorns in My Quilt

By Mohua Chinappa

It is a series of letters written by a daughter to her father after he passed away. Unspoken thoughts, unshared memories and unsaid words combine in this searing and poignant account of a relationship filled with joy, but with equal moments of sorrow.

The Wife and The Dancing Girl

By Anuja Chandramouli

Inspired by the *Silapathikaram*, Ilango Adigal's timeless Tamil classic, Anuja Chandramouli's bold new take delivers a double dose of romance that is unforgettably tender and unrelentingly tragic.

TENSION IN THE AIR

Actors performing the Kannada play *Buruki Vratha* at Ravindra Kalakshetra recently | **SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA**

QUICKFIX

WATERMELON MILKSHAKE

INGREDIENTS

- **Watermelon:** 1.5 cups (finely diced)
- **White sugar:** 2 tsp
- **Ice:** optional (put it if you want it to be cold)
- **Milk:** 2.5 cups
- **Vanilla ice cream:** optional

METHOD

- In a blender, add the watermelon and milk together.
- Add the sugar and blend it until smooth.
- Taste it. If it is too thick then add the vanilla extract.
- Pour it into a glass. Add ice if you want the shake to be chilled.

Contributed by **Rima Vasu**, New Delhi

DR VIVEK ARORA

drvivekarora@hotmail.com

The expert is a senior veterinarian, Dr Gandhi's Pet Clinic, Delhi.

My two-year-old dog has ear pain and is not letting me clear his ear canals. How do we solve this problem?

If your dog is showing signs of ear pain and resisting ear cleaning, it's crucial to first identify any underlying issues, like an infection or foreign object. Forcing the cleaning could cause further discomfort or injury. Instead, take your dog to your vet for an evaluation. The vet can check for infections, ear mites, or other problems and prescribe medication or ear drops to ease the pain and inflammation. In the meantime, gently wipe the outer ear with a cotton swab soaked with spirit. Make a habit of massaging his ear so he is used to the idea of you touching his ear. Once pathological issues are ruled out, start using ear cleanser available over the counter, which your vet can advise.

ASK AN XPERT

FITBIT

PARSVA BHARADVAJASANA II

(BHARADVAJA TWIST POSE II PREP SIDE BEND VARIATION)

This variation involves a seated lateral movement of the spine, hips, ribs, and shoulders. It can be performed standing, sitting, or supine. However, when practised seated, the range of motion in the chest and back is restricted, requiring additional effort to open and stretch the side of the body. It targets areas rarely used in daily activities, opening the ribs and chest to encourage deep breathing. Unlike shallow breathing, which can cause stiffness in the shoulders and neck and sometimes lead to back pain, this variation promotes relaxation. It is often used as a warm-up pose.

STEPS

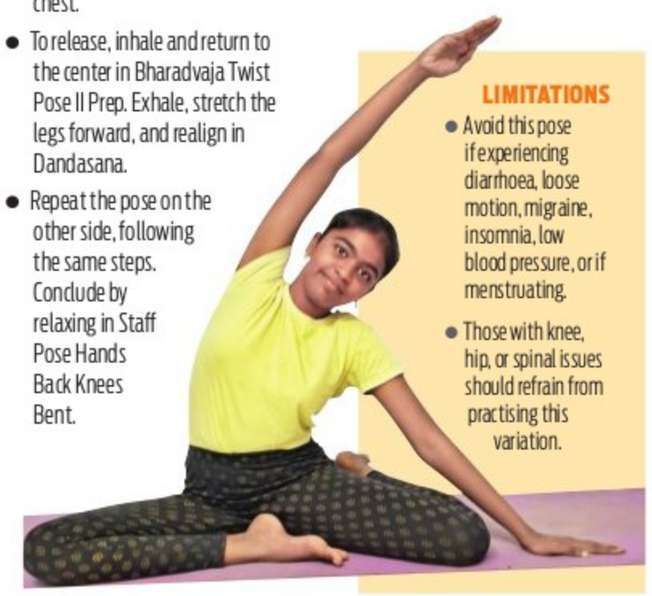
- Start in Dandasana (Staff Pose) with legs stretched out in front, hands by your sides, and spine erect. Stay here for a breath or two.
- Inhale, bend your left knee and place the foot behind you, aligning it with the left buttock. Let the inner knee rest on the floor.
- Ensure the front foot rests on the mat. Exhale, bend the right knee and bring the sole against the left thigh. Allow the knee to open outward, with the outer knee resting on the floor and the right heel close to the perineum. Sit in Bharadvaja Twist Pose II Prep.
- To bend sideways, inhale and raise your right arm, placing your left palm on the ground a foot away from your body, fingers pointing outward. Align the left palm with the right foot.
- Exhale and stretch the torso to the left, bending sideways. Lower the head and upper right arm towards the left side.
- Keep the upper right palm facing down with fingers pointing left. Hold for about six breaths or as per your capacity, looking forward with your chin aligned to your chest.
- To release, inhale and return to the center in Bharadvaja Twist Pose II Prep. Exhale, stretch the legs forward, and realign in Dandasana.
- Repeat the pose on the other side, following the same steps. Conclude by relaxing in Staff Pose Hands Back Knees Bent.

BENEFITS

- Stretches the psoas muscles, back muscles, inner thighs, and intercostal (breathing) muscles; the side muscles of the back, shoulders, hips, and abdomen.
- Strengthens joints, including shoulders, hips, knees, and pelvis.
- Engages intercostal muscles for active use of the chest and diaphragm and encourages deeper breathing, reducing stiffness in the neck, shoulders, and back.
- Stretches deeper muscles, tissues, ligaments, and tendons of the upper body.
- Reduces tension and stress, improving overall suppleness and health.
- Suitable for women and prenatal yoga practice and can be performed with a bolster for added support.
- Strengthens pelvic floor muscles.
- Helps alleviate symptoms of menopause and endometriosis.
- Prepares back, shoulder, and hip muscles for deeper backbends.
- Improves lower back stability and strength and addresses chronic back pain.
- Beneficial for seniors managing joint pain due to arthritis.
- May benefit those with scoliosis. They can perform the asana under the guidance of a yoga expert.

LIMITATIONS

- Avoid this pose if experiencing diarrhoea, loose motion, migraine, insomnia, low blood pressure, or if menstruating.
- Those with knee, hip, or spinal issues should refrain from practising this variation.



By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

@XpressBengaluru/@tniefeatures
bengalurucityexpress@gmail.com
@xpress_bengaluru

WHAT WHEN WHY WHERE

Camping Fun

Welcome the New Year in the midst of nature with this unforgettable camping trip to Ramanagara hills. Escape the monotony of the city with music by the campfire, special dinner and a range of fun activities – perfect for adventure enthusiasts and nature lovers.

WHEN: December 31, 2.30pm
WHERE: Adventure Nest Ramanagara, Devanahalli
CALL: 6366301119

Yoga Bliss

Kickstart the new year on a positive note with this well-rounded yoga workshop. De-stress by learning sequences focusing on flexibility, strength and relaxation.

WHEN: December 30, 6pm
WHERE: HeyBrewty Wellness Studio, Ashok Nagar
DETAILS: allevents.in

Artistic Pleasures

Join this fun, beginner friendly candle-making workshop. Learn about the craft and create your own unique set of candles with a variety of colours and scents in this two-hour session.

WHEN: December 31, 12pm onwards
WHERE: StoryZone, HSR Layout
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

Theatre Chronicles

Experience the joys of theatre with *Mukhyamantri*, a political play starring theatre artiste, **Chandru**. Set in an atmosphere of swaying political loyalties, explore the story of a protagonist intent on retaining his position through the approaching elections.

WHEN: December 31, 7.30pm **WHERE:** Ranga Shankara, JP Nagar **DETAILS:** rangashankara.org

Countdown Craze

Step into the world of extravagance at this New year's eve bash. Experience the greatest celebration under the glow of glittering lights, electrifying DJ music and the finest cocktails at this lavish soirée.

WHEN: December 31, 7pm onwards
WHERE: Sunburn, Koramangala
DETAILS: insider.in

SEASON'S SPREAD

Savour this exclusive New Year special menu along with live music. Delight your taste buds with flavour-packed dishes from Turkey roulade to moist plum cakes in this culinary experience like no other.

WHEN: December 30, 12pm
WHERE: SuzyQ, Queen's Road
CALL: 080 4725 0088

Comedy Nights

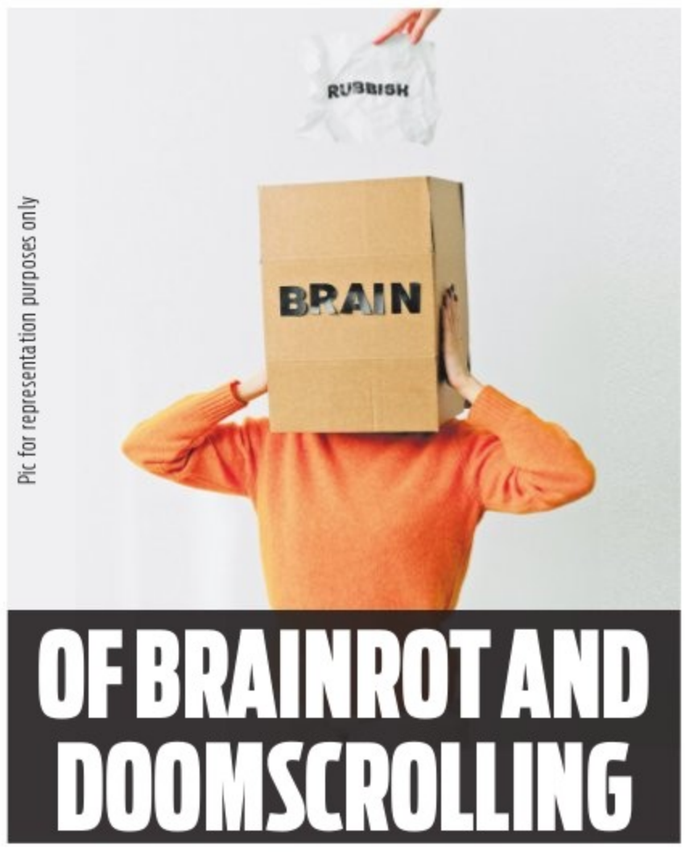
Laugh your way into the New Year with comic **Ganesh Kashyap**'s set. Go with your friends and family for a night full of rib-tickling jokes and witty punchlines delivered in Kannada.

WHEN: December 31, 6pm
WHERE: The Underground Comedy Club, Koramangala
DETAILS: bookmyshow.com

ART CORNER

BACK TO NATURE

Ajit Kumar Das, a celebrated pioneer in natural dye artistry, is admired for his exceptional craftsmanship and deep connection to nature, evident in his vibrant works inspired by flowers, plants, and birds



Pic for representation purposes only

OF BRAINROT AND DOOMSCROLLING

HRIDAY RANJAN
Urban Bourbon

(Writer, comedian)

THE Oxford Dictionary has finalised its word of the year, and it is brainrot. I have never given much importance to these words of the year. Every few years, the genteel men at Oxford decide to add words like 'medhu vada' or 'masala dosa' into their dictionary, and we celebrate it like an achievement. Of course, nobody points out that medhu vadas and masala dosas were being prepared at a time when the English language didn't even exist in its current form.

But this year's word struck a chord. Brainrot (while it is still being underlined on my computer) is something I have been dealing with for a few years now. When the engineers at Meta and TikTok were creating algorithms, they probably had me in mind. The perfect candidate - no day job, works only in the nights, zonked out circadian rhythms, and a messed up sleep cycle. Every night, I promise myself not to take my phone to bed. Then I remember that my phone contains the alarm. Like a toxic ex, my phone makes its way back to my bed despite repeated warnings. For the next few hours, I am looking at dogs chasing squirrels, cats dropping vases, and funny scenes from a movie I watched in 2004!

When I was younger, I used to judge grown-ups. They carried their newspapers to the washroom. I used to laugh at them. Elders in my family used to spend their free time writing 'Om Sai Ram' in a book countless times. 'Why can't they read comics? Or collect stickers? Or watch the highlights of the recent India vs Zimbabwe match?', I used to wonder! Today, I can't go to the washroom without my phone. I go to sleep looking at reels and wake up looking at them. At this point, me and reels are soulmates - we are constantly there for each other – through thick and thin.

It is not for lack of trying though. I have followed meditation pages that upload 60 second reels to calm and refresh my mind – so I can watch more reels with lesser guilt. I have followed pages titled 'Close Reels Daily' that post one reel and ask you to get off reels. I suspect engineers at Meta are actively hunting down the admins of such pages! I have set daily limits for different apps – that can be turned off in a second, thanks to the intuitive UIs of most modern phones. I might be a human in every definition of the term. But for an alien from Neptune, I am a homo sapien lab rat, being boosted with tiny dopamine shots throughout the day.

I sometimes wish to go back to the age without frequent dopamine shots. Back when televisions would wish us good night and shut down for the day. When all you could do was go to sleep and hope for an exciting dream. In fact, my dreams were like reels – 15 seconds of excitement, followed by a change of scenario. I was so obsessed with dreams that I even maintained a 'Dreams Diary' to note down interesting dreams that came to me. Most of them featured pretty classmates of mine, along with a Hero Honda CBZ!

I hope the word for next year is 'dumb phones'. I wish we could go back to those annoying phones with polyphonic ringtones that required you to wait for 10 minutes before posting a comment. That let you plug into FM radio without a monthly subscription, and we could listen to RJs conducting fake prank calls on their colleagues standing in the next room!

(The writer's views are personal)

My favourite books of the year

REAR VIEW 2024

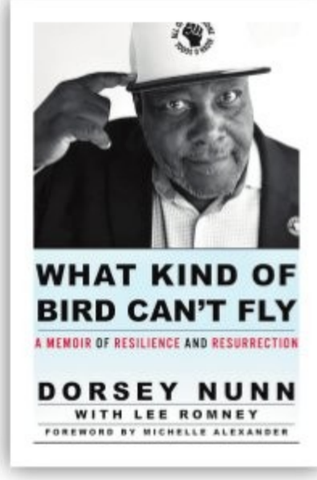
FLYLEAF
VR FEROSE

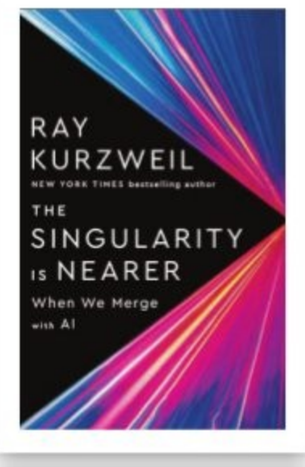
(The author is a technologist based in Silicon Valley who is gently mad about books)

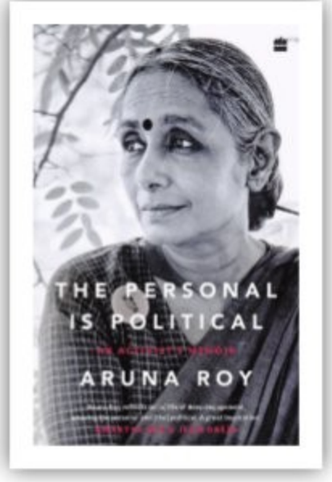
2024 was a fantastic bookish year for me. I completed two bucket list items: speaking at the Jaipur Literature Festival in January and opening an antiquarian bookstore in Bengaluru in November. On the reading front, though I did not read as many books as I would have liked, I read some outstanding ones.

Of the many books on artificial intelligence that I read, Ray Kurzweil's *The Singularity is Nearer* and Salman Khan's *Brave New Words* were the most notable. However, I was particularly impressed by the graphic novels *Dream Machine* by Appupen and *Artificial* by Amy Kurzweil. Appupen's story is about the advent of AI and its implications. Amy's book, on the other hand, deals with whether we can communicate with the dead using AI.

Other graphic novels that I enjoyed were *Stories by Manto: A Graphic Narrative* and Yuval Harari's three-part *Sapiens: A Graphic History*, a graphic adaptation of the bestseller *Sapiens* by renowned comics artists Daniel Casanave and David Vandermeulen. I have savoured every book by Harari, and the graphic novel is a unique way to make his work more accessible. Stories by Manto is a visually stunning publication where the author's prolific fiction finds new expression through a fusion of timeless prose and captivating illustrations.


WHAT KIND OF BIRD CAN'T FLY
A MEMOIR OF RESILIENCE AND RESURRECTION
DORSEY NUNN
WITH LEE ROMNEY
FOREWORD BY MICHELLE ALEXANDER

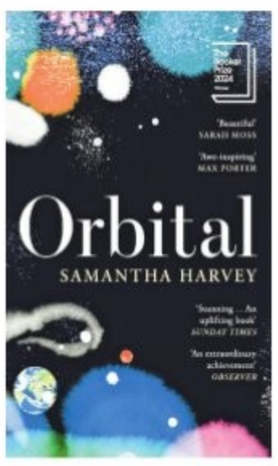




Among the memoirs, I enjoyed Aruna Roy's *The Personal is Political* and Dorsey Nunn's *What Kind of Bird Can't Fly*. Both are by social activists I know personally and are backed by lifelong activism. Aruna's memoir is the story of two parallel journeys – a 50-year engagement with public action in India and a personal narrative that traces how the author has striven to convert her ideological convictions into practice. In Dorsey's powerful memoir, he links the politics of 'Black Power' to the movements for Black lives and dignified reentry.

On the political front, as I was trying to understand the comeback of Trump, I found some answers in the book *Stolen Pride* by Arlie Russell Hochschild. Arlie uncovers the "Pride Paradox" that has turned the children and grandchildren of Roosevelt Democrats into Trump Republicans. This is the best book on the moral and political psychology of the new right, a masterclass in the art of listening across cultural and political divides in America.

The last book I read was the Booker-winner *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey. The story encompasses a single day in the life of six astronauts and cosmonauts aboard the International Space Station. During those 24 hours, they observe 16 sunrises and 16 sunsets over their silent blue planet, spinning past continents and cycling past seasons, taking in glaciers, deserts, mountains and oceans. This compact yet beautifully expansive novel invites us to observe Earth's splendour while reflecting on the individual and collective value of every human life.



Finally, the two books that are on my reading list are the national award-winning *James* by Percival Everett and *Patriot A Memoir* by Alexei Navalny. James is the reimagining of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* told from the enslaved Jim's point of view. *Patriot* is Navalny's memoir that he began writing shortly after his near-fatal poisoning in 2020. It is the full story of his life: his youth, call to activism, marriage and family, commitment to challenging a world superpower determined to silence him, and his total conviction that change cannot be resisted – and will come.

A special mention goes to Aditi Sowmyanarayan, whose book *Thus She Rose* I had the privilege of releasing at IIS 2024. It is a family saga set in the breathtaking valley of Pahalgam, combining the beauty of Kashmir with the depth of human emotion. Aditi's book is a testimony to the fact that autism has not hindered her creativity.

As we enter 2025, here is a question to ponder: How much AI was used to write these books? And will we need to disclose "No AI was used to write"? Furthermore, you who are reading this text, do you exist in the real world, or are you just an artefact in the virtual universe?

(The writer's views are personal)

Pic for representation purposes only

WE SHALL OVERCOME

THERE'S a nip in the air and the Christmas hysteria has subsided. All the hotels and restaurants competed with each other throwing fruit-soaking and tree-lighting ceremonies that were attended mostly by the newbies and different hued hoi-poloi just to rub shoulders with the hoi-oligoi, and guzzle copious amounts of 'free' flowing mulled wine (the operative word being free!). Not to say that our hosts were not generous to a fault, but a certain je-ne-sais-quoi was missing this year. Maybe most of the regulars were travelling and the repetitive 'sameness' of all the events was a little irksome. Whatever it was, a different 'magic' slowly but surely took over my city which thrilled me to bits!

A lot of auld Bangalore threw private parties where a close group of guests sat around a bonfire (yes! we still have bungalows with large gardens), and exchanged stories that only a few were privy to. Too many of us have suddenly lost family and friends and the swiftness with which they left has stunned most of us into an uncomfortable silence. It was wonderful and cathartic to share memories of the friends and family who weren't with us.

We are a generation of people whose foundation was laid in the most prestigious convent schools, so belting out Christmas carols was second nature to us. Sporadically someone would remember a teacher, nun or padre who drilled these carols into our subconscious brain and we would go into peals of laughter bordering on hysteria! All this bonding and bonhomie helped us in dealing with whatever angst we had.

The streets weren't overflowing with people and cars, (at least in my neck of the woods) and lo and behold! I heard strains of carol singing as a young bunch of people went door to door singing only like the young 'uns can, strumming their guitars and clapping in sync. Quite beautiful! It certainly lifted my spirits as a wave of nostalgia tugged at my heartstrings. I remember tagging along with my older siblings when I was a young 'un, as they joined a group of carollers. Of course that was an excuse for youngsters to meet and make eyes at each other and finalise their rendezvous on the next day. But, there was an aching innocence in what they did, purity in their affection and a line of decorum and decency. Look at me? I already sound like Tyrannosaurus Rex!

There is no doubt that with all progression there comes dissolution of what another generation held sacred. I suppose that is when one realizes that 'pretending' to still enjoy and revel in the 'same' things, reeks of certain desperation. Change is the name of the game and unless we do, we will slowly but surely get fossilised. There has to be a sense of ennui and restlessness that drives a person to do bigger and better things. And similarly, one has to find a place of calm and satisfaction, which fulfils you and gives you a sense of belonging. If that is a utopian nirvana…so be it.

I plan to be kind to myself and my loved ones, give them the time and space to flourish and grow, and at the same time step back and see the seedlings planted in my garden struggle or prosper, secure in the fact that one day they will overcome.

This is a 'glamma's' wisdom…thank you universe.

(The writer's views are personal)

RUBINATIONS
Rubi Chakravarti

Writer, actor and funny girl

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **PERIASWAMY** S/o Late Lakshmana Reddy R/a No. 39. 3rd A main 1st Stage 2nd Phase Manjunathanagar Bangalore-560010. I Have changed my name From **PERIASWAMY** TO **PERIASWAMY.L** Vide Affidavit Date: 24.12.2024. Sworn Before Notary: Lakshmaiah.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SAMEERA SIPPY,** Residing at Flat No. 312, A Block, Paramount Apartment, 4th Main, Behind BEML Gate, Bengaluru-560075, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **SAMEERA BHARAT SIPPY** to **SAMEERA SIPPY** henceforth I shall be known and called as **SAMEERA SIPPY** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 28/12/2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **C.V. EARAPPA** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MALA N,** aged about 56 years, W/o. NARAYANAA S, residing at No. 828, 20th Main, 15th Cross, 'A' Block, Opposite of Krishna Diamond Apartments, Sahakaranagar, Bangalore North-560092, Karnataka, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **MALA** to **MALA N,** vide affidavit dated 27.12.2024, sworn to before K.V. Nanjaiah, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHOBANA RAJAMANI, W/o. Vinay Gowrisankar, Residing at No. A0904, Brigade Panorama, Mysore Road, Anchepalya, Kumbalagodu, Kengeri, Bangalore- 560 074,**
have changed my name to
SHOBANA VINAY
Vide affidavit dated: 27.12.2024
before advocate and notary
Deepa .M, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MADANLAL**, C/O: RAM LAL, NO-15 Santinikethan Layout, 1st Cross, Munnekolala, Marathahalli Colony, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560037, have changed my name from **MADHAN LAL SHIRVI** to **MADANLAL**, vide affidavit dated 27/12/2024 sworn to before R.Vishwanath Advocate and Notary Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **DHRUV MASKERI,** S/O: SHANTANU ASHOK MASKERI Age: 20, Occupation: Student, residing at No 12, Pkt 5, Vasanth Vihar AWHO Colony, Vidyanagar, Bettahalasuru Post, Bengaluru, Karnataka 562157, have changed my name from **DHRUV SHANTANU MASKERI** to **DHRUV MASKERI,** vide affidavit dated 28/12/2024 sworn to before K.V.Mani Advocate and Notary Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Smt. S. SHANTISHRI, W/o S. Babu,** residing at "V6 Golden Nest Apartment," Flat No. 212, 2nd Floor, 16th Cross, Gnana Bharathi Layout, Mariyappanapalya, Bangalore - 560056, hereby declare that my name is mentioned as **SIVANANDHAM S. SANTHISREE** in some documents and **SIVANANDAM S. SANTHISREE** in others. Hereafter, I would like to continue as **S. SHANTISHRI** only.
This affidavit is sworn on 27th December 2024 before **ADVOCATE & NOTARY, H. S. SAKALESH ARADHYA,** Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, (OLD NAME), ARBAAZ PASHA AKRAM PASHA, S/o Mr. Akram Pasha, Age About 23years, Residing at No: 37, 1st Floor, 3rd Cross, Basavanagar, K G Halli, Bangalore -560045 have changed my Name from **(OLD NAME) ARBAAZ PASHA AKRAM PASHA to (NEW NAME) ARBAZ PASHA** Vide affidavit dated 28/12/2024 sworn before Notary "C SHARADA, B.sc., LLB.", Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MENACHERIL SUBRAMANIAN SUDISH**, S/o. Mr. Subramanian M.A, presently residing at Villa No. 10, Ferns Paradise, Outer Ring Road, Doddanekkundi, Bangalore-560037, Karnataka, India, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **MENACHERRY SUBRAHMANIAN SUDISH** to **MENACHERIL SUBRAMANIAN SUDISH,** vide affidavit dated 28.12.2024, sworn to before K.V. Jagannath Reddy, Advocate & Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Ms. MITALI SRIVASTAV, D/o Bishan Ji, residing at 103, GS Exotica, Gottigere, Bannerghatta Road, Bengaluru -560083,**
have changed my Minor daughter's name from
ADWIKA RATH to ADWIKA SRIVASTAV
vide Affidavit dated 28-12-2024
sworn before advocate and notary
C.N. Balasubramanyam, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Shivaraju, S/o. Thippegowda, R/at No.8/A, 11th Main, 6th Cross, Vrushabahavathinagar, Kamakshipalya Bengaluru-560079, Karnataka, India, hereby declare that I have changed my name from **SHIVARAJA** to **SHIVARAJU** Vide affidavit dated 14.12.2024, sworn before Advocate & Notary H.S.Sakalesh Aradhya, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SUKHDEV GAIKWAD**, F/o No. 13631824F Hav/Clk Gaikwad Sachin Sukhdev, R/o Vill- Anjansonda, PO – Ghatpimpri, The – Bhoom, Distt – Osmanabad, Maharashtra – 413534, have changed my name to **GAIKWAD SUKHADEV EKNATH.** Vide on affidavit dated 26/12/24, sowrn before notary Sivakumara, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I,SHANKAR PAGOJI, S/o,Fakkirappa, residing at No.F-01,2nd floor,Om Apartment,B-81,Padma Upadhaya Layout,Nagadevanahalli, Bangalore South, Bangalore-560056.Karnataka. I have changed my name from old Name **PAGOJI SHANKAR FAKKIRAPPA TO NEW NAME SHANKAR PAGOJI.** Vide affidavit dated 2/12/2024,Sworn before Notary R.Basavaraja,Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MOHAMMED ZABIULLA**, Aged about 55 years, S/o. MOHAMMED BASHEER, residing at No. 46, KHBCS Layout, 2nd Stage, 1st Main Road, SVK Layout, Bangalore - 560 079, Karnataka, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **MOHAMED ZABIULLA** to **MOHAMMED ZABIULLA** vide affidavit dated Dr. R.S. Vijay, Notary Public, Govt. of India, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **Mr. DANESH RAJASHEKHAR WARAD,** Aged about 45 years residing at Ward No.3, Near Hiremat, Almel Sindagi, Almel, Post- Almel, Dist - Vijayapura, State Karnataka - 586202, have changed my son's name from **ANIRUD** to **ANIRUD DANESH WARAD,** vide affidavit dated 20/12/2024 sworn to before T.C.Thimmaraja Advocate and Notary Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Arun Kumar Doddegowdana Koppalu Madaiah, S/o. Madaiah Kullehgowda, R/at No. 695, Krishna Nadi Road, Dobi Ghat, Brundavana Nagar, Gavipuram Extension, Bengaluru-560019, Karnataka, India, hereby declare that I have changed my name from **ARUN KUMAR DODDEGOWDANA KOPALU** to **ARUN KUMAR DODDEGOWDANA KOPPALU MADAIAH** Vide affidavit dated 27.12.2024, sworn before Advocate & Notary Deepa.M, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **KADUBAI**, M/o No. 13631824F Hav/Clk Gaikwad Sachin Sukhdev, R/o Vill- Anjansonda, PO – Ghatpimpri, The – Bhoom, Distt – Osmanabad, Maharashtra – 413534, have changed my name to **KADUBAI SUKHADEV GAIKWAD.** Vide on affidavit dated 26/12/24, sowrn before notary Sivakumara, Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **CHAITRA S**, Residing at No. 05, Nagaraja Market Road, Basavanagudi Bengaluru - 560004, have changed my name to **CHAITRA S ADIGA**, vide affidavit dated 20/12/2024 sworn before notary Venkataraju H G, Bangalore.

AFFIDAVIT
I, **GIRISH PATIL**, S/o. Late Sri. Shivangowda Basavanagowda Patil, R/at Flat No. 404 112, Haritha Apartment, 11th Cross, 5th Main, Malleswaram, Bengaluru - 560 003, do hereby declare that, my correct name is **GIRISH PATIL** as per mentioned in my Aadhar Card, Indian Driving License, PAN Card. My name in my passport is entered as **GIRISH SHIVANGOWDA PATIL** instead of **GIRISH PATIL** vide affidavit dated 23.12.2024 sworn to before Prakasha .C, Advocate & Notary, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
We, Mr. SARATH CHANDRA SARMA and Mrs. SUREKHA VANAM residing at No.10, UMA Sanjeevini Residency, 1st Main Lakshmi Nagar, Adjacent Elita Promenade, J.P Nagar 7th Phase, Bangalore 560078
we have changed our minor son's name from
VASISHTA PRANAV to VASISHTA PRANAV SHARMA
vide Affidavit dated 27-12-2024
sworn before advocate and notary
C.N. Balasubramanyam, Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Hiren Rameshchandra Shah, aged about 45 years, S/o. Mr. Rameshchandra Shah, R/at Flat No RJ 907, Purva Riviera Apartments, Varthur Main Road, Marathahalli, Bengaluru 560037, Karnataka, India, I have changed my minor son's name from **ARAHAM** to **ARAHAM HIREN SHAH** Vide affidavit dated 28.12.2024, sworn before Advocate & Notary Indira S S, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **DHARMENDRA SINGH KADUGODI SHAM,** Residing at NPK Nilaya, 1st Cross, Chandrasingh Layout, Near Sharda School, Kadugodi, Plantation, Bengaluru-560067, do hereby declare that I have changed my name from **DHARMENDRA SINGH SHAM SINGH** to **DHARMENDRA SINGH KADUGODI SHAM** for all purposes, vide affidavit dated 24/12/2024, sworn before Advocate and Notary **C.V. EARAPPA** at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **KARAN ARORA,** S/o Sangeeta Arora & Sandeep Dhoopar, aged about 19 years and residing at Villa 200 Belleza, Chandapura Dommasandra Road, Muthanallur Circle, Muthanallur, Bangalore-560099, hereby declare that I have changed my name from **KARAN DHOOPAR** to **KARAN ARORA** vide Affidavit dated 27.12.2024 duly sworn before Notary Harisha G, at Bangalore.

CHANGE OF NAME AND DATE OF SPOUSE OF VETERAN
I, **BERANDETH MARY,** Date of birth: 10.04.1966 (Existing Name and Date of birth as per Records) Spouse of NO : 14910273K Sepoy **A. AROCKIA SWAMY,** resident of Door No : 12 E, Santhi Nagar, I st Cross, Krishnagiri - PO & Dist, Tamil Nadu -635001, have changed My Name from **BERANDETH MARY** (Existing Name) to **S. BERNADETH MARY** (New Name) and Date of birth from 10.04.1966 (Existing Date of birth) to 12.02.1963 (Correct Date of birth) vide Affidavit dated 28.12.2024 sworn before Notary of Krishnagiri.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **SHEELAM SANDHYA,** aged about 32 years, W/o Nagaraju Kima, R/a C203, Suavity Otium, Yelenahalli Main Road, Akshaya Nagar Bangalore - 560068, I declare that below mentioned names **SHEELAM SANDHYA** and **KIRNA SANDHYA** are of one and same person pertains to me only, I declare that, my correct name is **SHEELAM SANDHYA,** vide affidavit dated 28/12/2024 sworn to before B.M.Chandrashekar Advocate and Notary Bangalore

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Sameer Prabhudesai, aged about 52 years, S/o. Mr. Sureshchandra Atchut Prabhudesai, R/at G-1102, Rohan Vasantha Apartments, Varthur Main Road, Marathahalli Bridge, Marathahalli, Bengaluru 560037, Karnataka, India, I hereby declare that I have changed my name from **SAMEER PRABHUDESAI** to **SAMEER SURESHCHANDRA PRABHUDESAI** Vide affidavit dated 27.12.2024, sworn before Advocate & Notary Indira S S, Bengaluru.

I will be directing my brother Darshan: Dinakar Thoogudeepa

CE FEATURES

The director is also preparing to launch his nephew, Chandan, after the release of his upcoming film, Royal

DIRECTOR Dinakar Thoogudeepa, who is gearing up for the release of his upcoming film Royal, recently addressed rumours of a rift with his brother, actor Darshan Thoogudeepa. He clarified that despite a lower public profile, their bond remains strong. "Family dynamics have their own complexities. We may have occasional disagreements, but our familial ties remain intact. Even during periods of less frequent interaction, our family bond endures," Dinakar explained.

Regarding directing Darshan, Dinakar confirmed that it is a future possibility. "Collaborating with my brother is definitely on the horizon, but the project is likely to commence in 2026. Darshan has two prior film commitments to fulfil before he can join my project," he revealed. The production aspect is still under consideration, with Dinakar exploring various options.

Addressing Darshan's health concerns, Dinakar shared that his brother is currently undergoing treatment for back pain in Mysuru under the supervision of their family physician, Dr Ajay Hegde. "Darshan is experiencing discomfort but is diligently undergoing physiotherapy. The doctor is closely monitoring his condition to determine the most effective treatment plan," he explained.

In addition to his brother's project, Dinakar is also preparing to launch his nephew, Chandan, into the film industry. "I am currently developing a script specifically for Chandan, which will be my primary focus following the completion of my commitments to Royal," he revealed.

A still from the film

'Royal truly lives up to its name'

Prem, Sanjana Anand, Dinakar Thoogudeepa and Virat

A SHARADHAA

ROYAL has been generating buzz well ahead of its release—and for all the right reasons. Directed by Dinakar Thoogudeepa, this eagerly awaited film has captured the attention of audiences across Karnataka. Set to hit screens on January 24, *Royal* stars Viraat and Sanjana Anand in lead roles and is produced by Jayanna and Bhogendra under the banner of Jayanna Combines. With three hit songs already released and the much-anticipated trailer slated for the second week of January, the film's team recently shared exciting insights with the media about what makes *Royal* stand out.

Director Dinakar Thoogudeepa expressed his satisfaction with how the project is coming together. "The success of the songs has been overwhelming," he said. "But the real credit goes to Raghu Nidu-valli, who not only wrote the screenplay but also the dialogues. His vision, combined with the efforts of the technicians, has made the film a success. Producers Jayanna and Bhogendra have supported me every step of the way. Their focus was never solely on profits but on gifting the industry a talented hero. You might wonder if such an investment was justified for Virat's second film, but their goal was to make Virat a gift to the industry," he shared, highlighting the film's thoughtful production process.

The movie was filmed across some of the most beautiful locations in Karnataka and Goa, including Bangalore, Mysore, and Mangalore. The picturesque landscapes are set to add to the grandeur of *Royal*, which promises to deliver a visual feast along with its compelling storyline.

Virat, who made his lead role debut with *Kiss*, returns to the big screen in *Royal* and is ready to take on the mantle of a hero. "The producers, Jayanna and Bhogendra, are the main reason this film happened. I consider it a blessing to work under the direction of Dinakar sir. I've learnt a lot from him, and the experience has been enriching. *Royal* truly lives up to its name. It's a film filled with talented artists, and the three songs have already struck a chord with the audience," said Virat.

Sanjana Anand, who stars alongside Virat, is equally excited about the film's potential. "I'm thrilled with how *Royal* has turned out. The songs are already a hit, and everyone who has watched Dinakar sir's films knows the kind of magic he creates on screen. This film marks a unique turn in his career, and for me, it's the most special project I've worked on. The story is full of surprises, and I believe *Royal* will become the perfect film to start the New Year with," Sanjana shared.

Apart from Virat and Sanjana, *Royal* comes with an ensemble cast, including Raghu Mukherjee, Chaya Singh, Achyuth Kumar, Rangayana Raghu, Pramod Shetty, Ravi Bhatt, and Gopalakrishna Deshpande, among others.

The technical team includes cinematographer Sanketh, music composer Charan Raj, editor KM Prakash, art director Mohan B Kere, and action choreographer Ravi Verma.

Sanjith Hegde strikes the right chord with 'Hoo Dumbi' from *Manada Kadalu*

Sumukha and Sanjith Hegde

Manada Kadalu, directed by Yogaraj Bhat, stars Sumukha, Rashika Shetty and Anjali Anish

A still from the film

CE FEATURES

DECEMBER 29th marks the 18th anniversary of the iconic Kannada film *Mungaru Male*. The film, which garnered immense popularity and critical acclaim, continues to hold a special place in the hearts of Kannada cinema lovers. This milestone coincides with the latest news that the director-producer duo, Yogaraj Bhat and E Krishnappa are collaborating again for their upcoming film, *Manada Kadalu*.

While the film is in post-production, the first song, 'Hoo Dumbi,' was launched at a grand event, celebrating the return of the successful collaboration between composer Harikrishna and director-lyricist Yogaraj Bhat. The track out on Dbeats channel features lead actors Sumukha and Rashika Shetty, with vocals by Sanjith Hegde, choreography by Murali, and cinematography by Santhosh Rai Pathaje. The song became an instant hit, connecting with audiences far and wide.

Legendary actor Dattatreya (Dattanna) took to the stage, evoking nostalgia and reverence for the golden age of music. Expressing his admiration for iconic voices like Pankaj Malik and KL Saigal, he remarked, "Whenever I want to cry, I listen to their songs. There's a purity in old melodies." He went on to sing a line, letting the music convey his emotions and drawing the audience into his heartfelt tribute."

Dattanna also spoke about discovering new talent in Sanjith Hegde. 'I saw this boy, Sanjith Hegde, and asked his age. I was thrilled to see his potential,' he recalled, crediting Puneeth Rajkumar for introducing Sanjith to the industry. Emphasising that true talent doesn't require certificates, he said it's the voice that forges an emotional connection with the audience. Dattanna expressed his excitement for *Manada Kadalu*, extending his best wishes to director Yogaraj Bhat and producer E Krishnappa for the film's success."

The excitement continued as lead actors Anjali Anish and Rashika Shetty took the stage. Anjali, a newfound fan of Sanjith Hegde's voice, shared her enthusiasm, saying, "I'm thrilled for this opportunity." Rashika, watching the song for the first time, admitted, "I don't know how to react." Both actors thanked director Yogaraj Bhat for the beautiful song and expressed their appreciation to the entire team for their support.

The song 'Hoo Dumbi,' written during a memorable session at E Krishnappa's farmhouse, has already captured the hearts of listeners. Sanjith Hegde, reflecting on his journey, spoke of his admiration for composer V Harikrishna. "Hari Sir wanted me to sing in a particular way, and we worked on it for three days," Sanjith explained. "It wasn't just about hitting the right notes, but about finding harmony in every word." The soulful melody and thoughtful lyrics have made the track a standout moment in Hegde's career.

Harikrishna, a musician in his own right, acknowledged the challenge of creating something timeless. "It's easy to sing, but difficult to talk," he said, praising the stunning visuals of the film and the efforts of the entire team. He also commended the performances of Sumukha, Rashika, and Anjali, alongside the contributions of art director Shivakumar and choreographer Murali.

Veteran producer E Krishnappa reflected on the life-changing success of Mungaru Male 18 years ago. "It still feels like yesterday," he recalled. Krishnappa shared how, during the pandemic, he immediately recognized the potential of *Manada Kadalu* when Yogaraj Bhat narrated the story. "I wanted to take a chance on newcomers," he said, referring to lead actors Sumukha, Anjali, and Rashika. He praised Bhat's dedication, highlighting how the director filmed across all seasons to authentically capture the essence of the story.

Yogaraj Bhat's dedication to the project is evident in every detail. Krishnappa noted that Bhat's passion for his work and his commitment to fresh talent were central to the film's success. "This is a sincere effort by Yogaraj Bhat, and the entire team has worked together to make this a project to remember," he said.

Manada Kadalu is not just a film; it is a celebration of talent, teamwork, and the love for music. With a mix of new faces and seasoned veterans, soulful music, and an inspiring story, the film is set to make a lasting impact on Kannada cinema. As Dattatreya aptly said, the film represents everything that is good about the industry today—a perfect blend of tradition, innovation, and heart. *Manada Kadalu* also stars Ranganayana Raghu, Shivadwaj, Suraj, and Gadda Vijji, among others. The film is gearing up to hit theatres in Summer 2025.

Team *Manada Kadalu*

Directed by Gurudatha Ganiga and starring Prajwal Devaraj, Karavali takes a bold approach to storytelling, with the latest teaser setting the bar even higher

KARAVALI PEEKS INTO THE PRESTIGE OF THE 'PISHACHI' CHAIR

CE FEATURES

KARAVALI is one of the most anticipated films set for release in 2025, and it's easy to see why. With every teaser and poster, the film continues to spark growing curiosity. Directed by Gurudatha Ganiga and starring Prajwal Devaraj, *Karavali* takes a bold approach to storytelling, with the latest teaser setting the bar even higher.

The teaser's unique focus sets it apart. While most teasers highlight lead actors or key moments, *Karavali* centres around an object—an antique chair. It opens with the striking line, "The chair of prestige is not just a chair; it's a 'Pishachi,'" before building suspense with actor Mitra's voice saying, "No one takes their eyes off the chair of prestige." This intriguing premise imbues the chair with mysterious significance.

Set against the backdrop of Kambala, *Karavali's* plot unfolds with the birth of a child and a calf in a shed. The teaser picks up from this moment, showing the child growing up while fixated on the 'chair of prestige.' As the story develops, it hints at the powerful forces surrounding this chair. Mitra's chilling narration and Ramesh Indira's presence further elevate the teaser's dark, gripping atmosphere. The trailer ends with a tantalising glimpse of Prajwal Devaraj in a key scene.

A still from the film

Gurudatha Ganiga

What further excites audiences are the three distinct looks of Prajwal Devaraj revealed so far. Whether portraying a Yakshagana artist, a Kambala enthusiast, or something else, his role remains shrouded in mystery.

Eighty percent of the shooting has already been completed, and *Karavali* has largely been filmed around coastal Karnataka. The film's rural setting, centred on the conflict between humans and animals, promises to be as thrilling as it is unique. Produced by Ganiga Films and VK Films Association, *Karavali* will feature Sachin Basrur's music and Abhimanyu Sadanandan's cinematography.

Into the world of *UI*

Team *UI*

CE FEATURES

IT'S been a week since the release of Upendra's *UI*, a film that Upendra not only directed but also starred in. The film has sparked intense discussions and curiosity, with fans and critics alike still trying to decode its meaning and interpret the focus Upendra spoke about. However, Upendra has kept the film's true essence shrouded in mystery, offering only one hint: "People always ask me, 'Do you plant worms in people's heads?' But in this film, I'm the one removing the worms."

During a media interaction on Saturday, Upendra offered profound insights into *UI*, transcending mere cinematic analysis. He delved into his personal philosophies and reflections on life, revealing the film as a vehicle for deeper introspection. Discussing the climax, Upendra explained, "I deliberately deconstruct the narrative. It's not about a neatly tied-up conclusion, but about planting a seed of awareness within the viewer." He aims to awaken the inherent power within each individual, a facet often overlooked by society.

"If I live my life authentically, according to my own desires, nothing else truly matters," he declared, articulating the film's core message. The clock displayed at the end isn't intended to dictate a specific meaning but rather to encourage viewers towards self-realisation, allowing them to discover their own truths.

Upendra further emphasises the importance of internal happiness and self-discovery: "The attempt to convey this message is mine, but the realisation lies within you." He asserts that true happiness stems from within, not from external validation or the pursuit of superiority. "We've been conditioned to believe that happiness lies in surpassing others, but do those at the pinnacle truly find fulfillment? No. True happiness resides within, in the serenity of one's mind." He urges viewers to explore their own unique sources of joy, whether through dance, painting, or any other pursuit, without succumbing to societal pressures and predefined notions of success.

On the relevance of ancient epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, Upendra said, "These ancient tales are universal truths." He highlights the timeless nature of these stories, noting their continuing influence on modern filmmakers. "Rama is often seen as the soul; that's why he's called 'Atma-Rama.'" The core conflict between strength and soul, mind and body, remains central to storytelling, connecting even today.

Upendra clarifies that his film isn't meant to convey social or political messages but personal insights: "It's not about searching for work; it's about doing it." He encourages aspiring creators to start now, saying, "You don't need to wait. You already have a phone, a camera, editing tools, and music. Start creating today." His message is clear: dreams should begin in the present, requiring only a shift in mindset.

Addressing comparisons to his past films, Upendra explained, "Every story has its own flow. If something worked in one film, it won't necessarily work in the next." He avoids formulas, preferring that the film and its dialogues evolve naturally. "I didn't plan anything; everything in the film flowed organically," he added.

He is also impressed by how the audience has interpreted the film: "The film is being interpreted uniquely by each person." There's no unanimous opinion, as each viewer brings their own understanding to the social, mental, and spiritual themes explored in the film.

Finally, when asked about the villain, Upendra reflects, "The villain is the system. And that system is you and me. So, in this film, the villain is me." He challenges traditional notions of good and evil, explaining that the real antagonist lies within the structures we live by.